

Notes
CSB

NOTES ON THE HISTORY OF THE
CONGREGATION OF PRIESTS OF
SAINT BASIL — COLLECTED BY
ROBERT JOSEPH SCOLLARD, CSB



5 1



1953 - 1969

L E T T E R S

w r i t t e n

to his family

b y

Kevin John Kirley

CSB

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1953 - 1956



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September 11, 1953

1

Dear Mom, Dad and Kink,

Thank you so much for your very good and very welcome letter. I think it arrived earlier than I received it, as I only discovered yesterday where the mail is left. Glad to hear the river boat picked up the rushed letter written on the "Atlantic".

Yesterday we took a beautiful drive out to Rheims to see the famous cathedral there. I sent you some postcards from there which will likely arrive soon. I don't know if they go airmail or not. We came back by way of Soissons. The countryside is lovely just now. It seems to be a very rich section out that way, the land I mean. They grow a lot of sugar beets and potatoes^{or's}, both of which look to be a good crop.

So far I haven't visited too much of Paris itself. You see there are some Canadian and American lads, all priests, here now who have rented a car for the summer and are touring the country. They are very kindly taking me into their company. This afternoon five of us are setting out for a trip to Lourdes, and we are going by way of Lisieux, St. Michel, St. Malo, etc. down along the west coast of France. I'll keep you posted as we go along. I shall return to Paris from Lourdes after four or five days, but the others are going on into Spain and Portugal and then over to Italy. I should be a lovely drive.

Am feeling fine and making an effort to get onto this French wine. They say it's good, but just at present I'd take a cup of tea before it. Will certainly pray for you all at Lourdes and that goes for all acquaintances in the parish.

* * *



September 17, 1953

2

Dear Mom, Dad and Kink,

I hoped I would have time to write you a sizeable letter but again I have only a minute before setting off again.

We reached Lourdes Wednesday afternoon. What a beautiful place of prayer! It's hard to leave it.

The fellow^s talked me into accompanying them on their trip thru Spain. So if I can get a visa to enter the country, I will go along. We are going to the town of Pau this morning where I will try to get the permit. The trip so far has been grand. Will write you later.

* * *

Wednesday, September 23, 1953. Fatima, Portugal.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

Here we are at Our Lady's Shrine at Fatima. We arrived about 3 p.m. yesterday afternoon under a cloudless sky - something rare here, they say, for it rains a great deal. We were able to get rooms at a Seminary where I am writing this now. One of the novices, a lad from Glasgow, Scotland, took us around to all the different places of interest. We saw and met the parents of two of the three little children, Francisco and Jacinta. They are a very humble and patient old couple, and did not seem to mind us as we took pictures of them. The parents of Lucy, the girl who is now a Carmelite nun in Coimbra, Portugal, are dead. But we met Lucy's sister who showed us about the house. The showing about didn't take very long for the house is about as



September 23, 1953

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humble a dwelling as you could imagine. We went to the rock where the angel appeared to the three children in 1916 and then to the spot where Our Lady appeared on August 19 of 1917. The main place of the apparitions, however, is near the basilica. A little chapel makes it, where we all said Mass this morning. I offered mine for your sanctification, i.e. Mom and Dad, the whole family, relatives.

We are leaving Fatima this afternoon and hope to stay in Lisbon tonight. I have been sending you a postcard at intervals, under funny circumstances sometimes, such as writing them while driving along and mailing them on the run.

Would like to make this longer, as I promised in the last letter, but once again I'm in a hurry. Will certainly write at greater length from Paris.

* * *

36, rue Guilleminot, Paris XIVme, France.
Tues. Oct. 6 1953

Dear Kink,

First of all I want to thank you most sincerely for your most welcome letters, written September 9 and 17 respectively. It is wonderful to get news from home and all the more so right now since I've been deprived of it entirely for three weeks or more. If ever you have other spare moments and feel so inclined you will do me a great favour by writing.



October 6, 1953

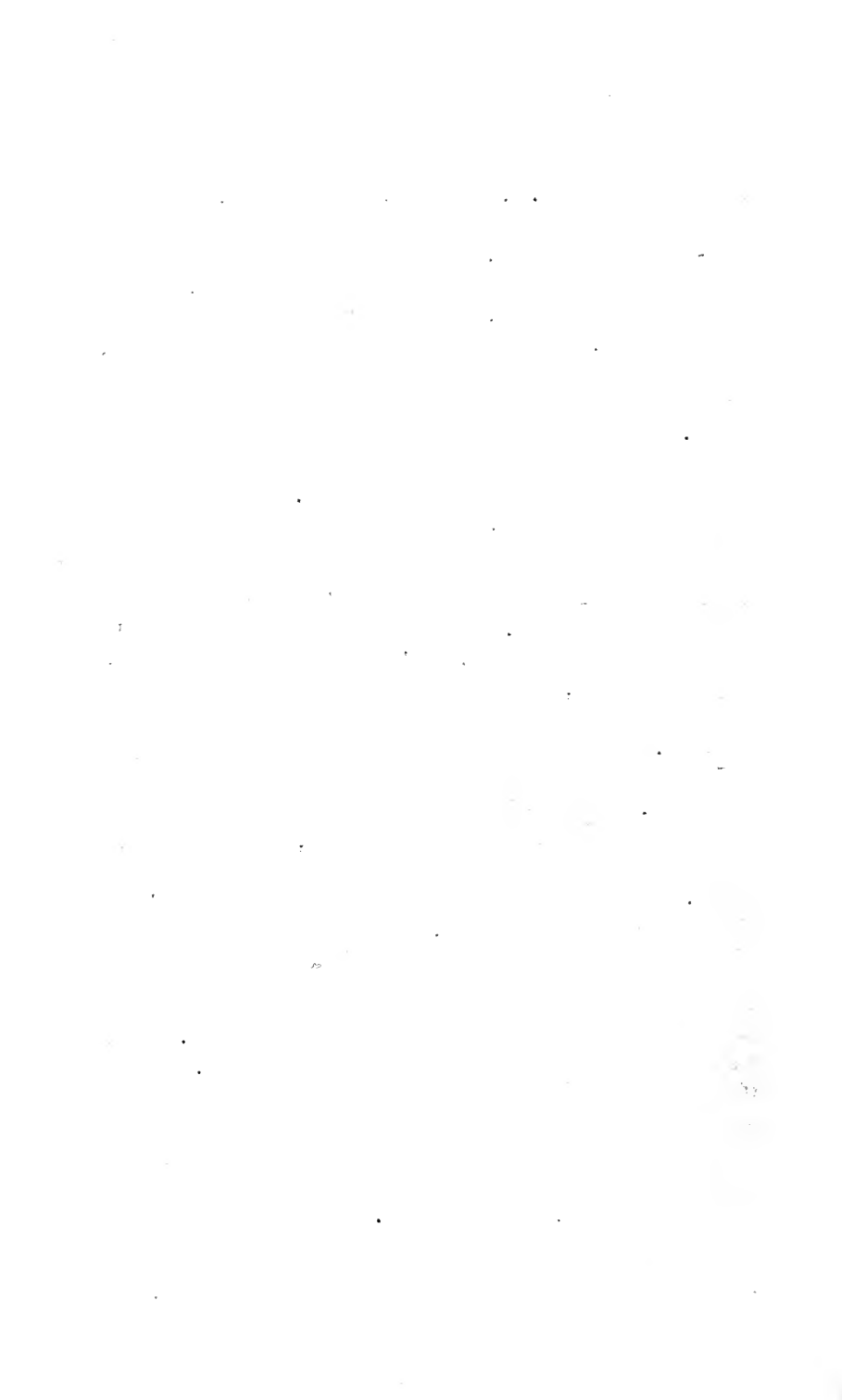
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We got back to Paris from our Spain-Portugal trip about 9 p.m. Sunday, October 4. How good it was to see a pile of letters awaiting me - your own two, four from mother (and another arrived just yesterday morning), one from Lou and Jean, seven from my confreres in Toronto, and one from a friend in London, as well as a card from table partners of Glasgow whose acquaintance I made on the way over. You can imagine what a grand time I had reading each of them carefully and in the order in which they were dated. Letters are good at all times, but they seem to take on a special significance when they come from afar.

Your account of the Wheatley's first visit was very comical, although I guess it didn't seem so at the time. I'm very sure they enjoyed it all, though, even if the kids were unable to make away with as much as they wished. Such a situation as that never looks half so disastrous to the guests as to the hostess. Mom tells me in her last letter that you were having a return match, as it were, and no doubt it came off more according to plan. There are some things we just can't figure out in advance, particularly so when they come on one as a surprise eh?

I am sorry to hear Michael has not been well and sincerely hope he feels better now. Tell him not to worry about missing school. From what I could judge in the little reading lesson we held together one night at his home he is miles ahead of where I was after one year of school (with all due respect due Miss Droogan and Miss Shannon).

How is Margaret? Something tells me she would like to be back helping with the cottage. But



October 6, 1953

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as you say she is safer where she is, and good company too. I'm keeping my eye peeled for some little thing in the shop windows over here that she might like. Never having done much shopping for ladies, I don't seem to have much skill, but however ...!

My room here is still in a frightful state of disorder. I hope to get it straightened somewhat by the end of this week. Registration at the Sorbonne begins October 20. In the mean time there is a orientation course being offered which I may sit in on if they will permit. It began last Friday.

We are living in a parish house, Father Dick Donovan and I, but you would hardly recognize it as such, at least from the exterior. It is very large and looks more like an apartment building. Some day the sun is just right I will take a picture of it and send it along. Everything is very different, and in so many ways it is difficult to enumerate them. I guess it is just the difference between the Old and New World.

Right now the weather is fairly warm throughout the day, but quite cool at night. Some flowers are blooming in the parks, although not in such profusion as in southern Spain. In Seville, Cádiz, Malaga, Granada, etc. it was just like mid summer. The day we drove along the Mediterranean we were tempted to go in swimming, the sun was so strong. But by making mention of Spain's flower gardens, I don't mean to say the country as a whole is more fertile. The fact is that what we saw of it was extremely desert-like and mountainous, and we saw a fairly good-sized part from

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Burgos across to Salamanca, from Seville down to the south, up to the centre at Madrid, and over east to Barcelona. The workable sections were very small and few. How the Spanish make a living is beyond me.

We could see a marked difference whe we finally got through the Pyrenees into France on the return trip. The whole of western France, which we travelled through on the way down, and the southern central section up to Paris which we covered coming back, is a veritable Garden of Eden compared to Spain. But I will say this in Spain's favor, that they seem to have the faith very strongly and here they surely take precednece over France. We said Mass every morning in a different church and city throughout Spain, and every morning there was what I considered a real crowd of people for a weekday. And among these people were not a few young men and women, teenagers. It seems to me if the youth are at Mass, the rest are there too. And those in attendance went to Communion almost to a person. I guess the memories of the Reds' atrocities are still fresh in their mind.

Well Kink, I could go on for pages telling you of experiences of the last month. Perhaps throughout the letters to follow it will all come out. I am sending the account of the trip across the ocean today by ordinary mail. Don't worry about my state here. I am feeling fine, thank God, and gradually (very gradually) acquiring a taste for the "vin ordinaire". I have a little gas burner in my room, so if you want to send tea bags or canned drinks of some kind they will be very welcome. I try to prepare a little lunch



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about 5 p.m. because supper is not until 7:45 each night.

P.S. If you send anything over in a box be sure not to seal the box; just tie it up firmly. Otherwise the duty is high.

* * *

Sunday, October 11, 1953

Dear Mom and Dad,

After all the wonderful letters you wrote me, Mom, it is high time I was sending you some answer. I can't tell you how good it was to return to Paris last Sunday night and find all that mail there for me. In spite of the enjoyable trip through Spain and Portugal and Southern France with all their interesting places and people I was sort of starved for news of you all. From now on the exchange should be more regular. I am glad the post cards are arriving. It's not surprising, I guess, that the order of them got mixed up somewhat. Some or most of them I sent myself and some I confided to others to mail; but all of them were sent from different places, some of which were nearer the ocean ports than others. The fellows with whom I was travelling kidded me to some extent on that score. I was most of the time either writing one or looking for a box to mail one already written.

[Monday, October 12] I'm afraid the great number of pictures I took will not be so great. Last Monday I left in two rolls to be developed just to try the shop out, to see if they do a good job there, and on returning there Saturday afternoon I learned to my sorrow that only eight out of sixteen pictures were good. I

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couldn't put the blame on the developer because the eight other negatives were jet black as the result of over exposure. The clerk explained to me, and I guess he is right, that the shutter must have opened and stayed open when the pictures were taken. Apparently it works alright sometimes for eight of them were good, but other times it gets stuck and floods the sensitive paper with light. So I guess I'll have to leave it in and see what they can do. There is a Kodak shop just down the street that does repair work. I have nine other rolls here in my desk, but there is no telling how many pictures will come out of them. I seem to remember Kink telling me that light was getting in somewhere, but I thought more at the edge of the film by reason of it not rolling straight. That defect I tried to remedy by taking the film out of the camera always in the dark. But the defective shutter, if that's what it is, is too delicate a job for me to tackle, though the Kodak shop should be able to handle it alright. The pictures that did come out are quite good, and I shall have some prints made from the better ones to send you.

This morning, Monday, I received your letter Mom, mailed on October 9. That is pretty good time eh? from the 9th to the 12th. We're not so far apart after all! Thanks so much for writing again and giving me all the news. I'm sure you are enjoying the Mission Renewal; it is a time of great graces for the whole parish, and indeed for the whole Church, for your prayers help out all the members of the Mystical Body the world over.

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What an enormous amount of wheat, both "buck" and "non-buck". I'm wondering if all that had to be bagged; come to think of it, I guess there is no other way it could go. What job! Somebody must have been busy just cutting strings.

You were asking about the temperature in Tanger. It was about 75 or 80 degrees the day we were there, and the Arab that showed us around the city said it stayed that way all the year round. I don't know if he was spoofing us or not; perhaps Aust could verify or nullify that statement. But it was lovely that day, and probably does escape the torrid heat that they have farther south by reason of the big Mediterranean, or is it the Atlantic there?, the latter, I guess, since Tanger is west of Gibraltar.

And as for the Spanish it did help out to some extent. I didn't feel linguistically paralysed in Spain or even Portugal where Portuguese is spoken but there they understand Spanish. The two are very close. But we had Father Gene Malley with us, a Basilian, who did post graduate work in Spanish at Toronto University and who bore the brunt of making inquiries, purchases, etc.

This paper is very thin. I hope by writing on both sides I don't make both illegible. Before I forget, Mom, you can dispose of that list of serial numbers for the Travellers' Cheques. I have cashed them all. The rate at present over here is about 378 francs to the dollar. It changes a bit every day, but is roughly that.

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This morning I risked death itself by going out on my bicycle into the busiest traffic section. Not having previously made an appearance at the Canadian Embassy I went up there this morning, in the rain, by the way; and from there proceeded the whole length of the Champs Elysées and down Boulevard Saint Germain to get to a little street where there lives a translator. Over here you have to have any foreign diplomas translated into French by an official translator before they are accepted at the University of Paris. So my guardian angel and I made our way through a screaming stream of cars, buses, trucks, motorcycles, motor scooters, motor bikes and what have you, till we got to the desired places. I guess after a few sorties one acquires more confidence. It is certainly a handier way to get around than taking the Metro or the bus.

You will be surprised to hear that this afternoon I got in my winter's wood. Don't let this scare you, but our residence here has no central heating. Each man looks after his own room. So I have a little box stove here which the priest before me had, Father Walter Principe, CSB, (now at the Seminary in Toronto). The wood is already cut short and split, so all I have to do is burn it. Although Paris does not have a severe winter, nevertheless it suffers a damp coldness which begins pretty soon, and which I will bend every effort to dispel, at least in my own room. That's why heavy socks and sweaters and "longies" are in order here during the winter months. Otherwise it is very hard to study, they say. The pyjamas you made, Mom, are wonderful. It gets

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quite chilly at night, even now. And you can tell Anne that wool sweater she gave me has been on almost every day, especially in the evening and morning. I am pretty well fixed for clothes as a matter of fact, so don't worry.

Well I better sign off for today and get this on the wing your way. Haven't yet started the account of our trip by car. Hope I can get it done before classes start. Registration is October 20.

* * *

Saturday, October 24, 1953

Dear Mom, Dad and Kink,

I am dating this Saturday although it is now only Friday night at the moment of composition; however it will be tomorrow before it gets on its way westward. Hope it finds you all well. I recieved your last letter of October 18 yesterday, Mom, and one a few days earlier from Kink. So good to hear from both of you; your letters are appreciated more than I can say. Aust also wrote me a good long one around the first of the month, though it took awhile to get here, 16 days I think. It was nonetheless interesting and welcome for that, however. Wish I could answer all of them separately but I'm afraid it will not be possible, especially since classes are getting under way soon. I've been able to write at fair length up until now since I have had lots of time for it, but soon it will be a case of stealing a moment when I can (which I promise I will steal, too, without fail). I'm wondering if the letters I sent by ordinary mail



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have arrived yet. The one giving the account of the voyage over should be there now, I think, and perhaps the first "volume" of the trip through Spain. Two others should arrive soon after, and the fourth and final one is "at the press" as it were. They are all sort of weighty so I sent them by ordinary mail to cut down on costs.

Right now I am awaiting a letter from the Rector of the University telling me what credits I have over here as equivalent to the work I did at the University of Toronto; I am rather anxious to hear as it makes a big difference on the length of time it will take me to get the Licence, or at least on the number of courses I'll have to take.

The day before yesterday, Father Dick Donovan and I went to see a film of Shakespeare, Jules César, being played here now. It was wonderful. The speech of Marc Antony in the public square after the death of Caesar is truly a masterpiece. You must see it if it comes. It was produced in English, the exact same lines that Shakespeare wrote. So a reading of the play before going would help a lot, as sometimes it is not the easiest language to follow.

This Sunday a group of students are going by bus to Fontainebleau, one of the summer residences of Louis XIV in the 17th century. We are going along too, if we can arrange for Mass early enough here in the parish. It should be interesting, and I will undoubtedly be making mention of it later. Almost every afternoon I go out for a hour or so on my "vélo" or bike. It is always a lot of fun to go winding through the dense traffic as

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though I were hurrying to a sick call, when I'm not really going anywhere in particular at all. Really a bike is the best way to get around; you can get in small spaces where cars cannot, and if the traffic jams up at a bottle-neck you can climb off and push the bike along the sidewalk in triumph as it were passed the stalled cars. The cassock presents a bit of a problem getting into the chain, or the spokes; you have to tuck it up somewhat before setting out. The year in Quebec sort of accustomed me to going around in strange conditions with the habit on; dear old Quebec - it is so like Paris and other French towns it isn't funny. If you want to get a taste of Europe go down to Quebec city in the old section; you have a pretty close replica there.

Well folks, I better put this machine in its box for the night or my next-door neighbor is going to start to complain of the noise. Am looking forward to the box you are sending. It should prove of invaluable assistance for our afternoon lunches. Will write again, Love.

* * *

Monday, November 2, 1953

"La Fête des Morts"

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

A greeting on the feast of All Souls; I know you were at Mass this morning or perhaps at several praying for our beloved that have preceded us. I offered the first of my three Masses for Gertrude, and did not forget the other departed relatives. Hope I can get in some visits before the day is over. We received

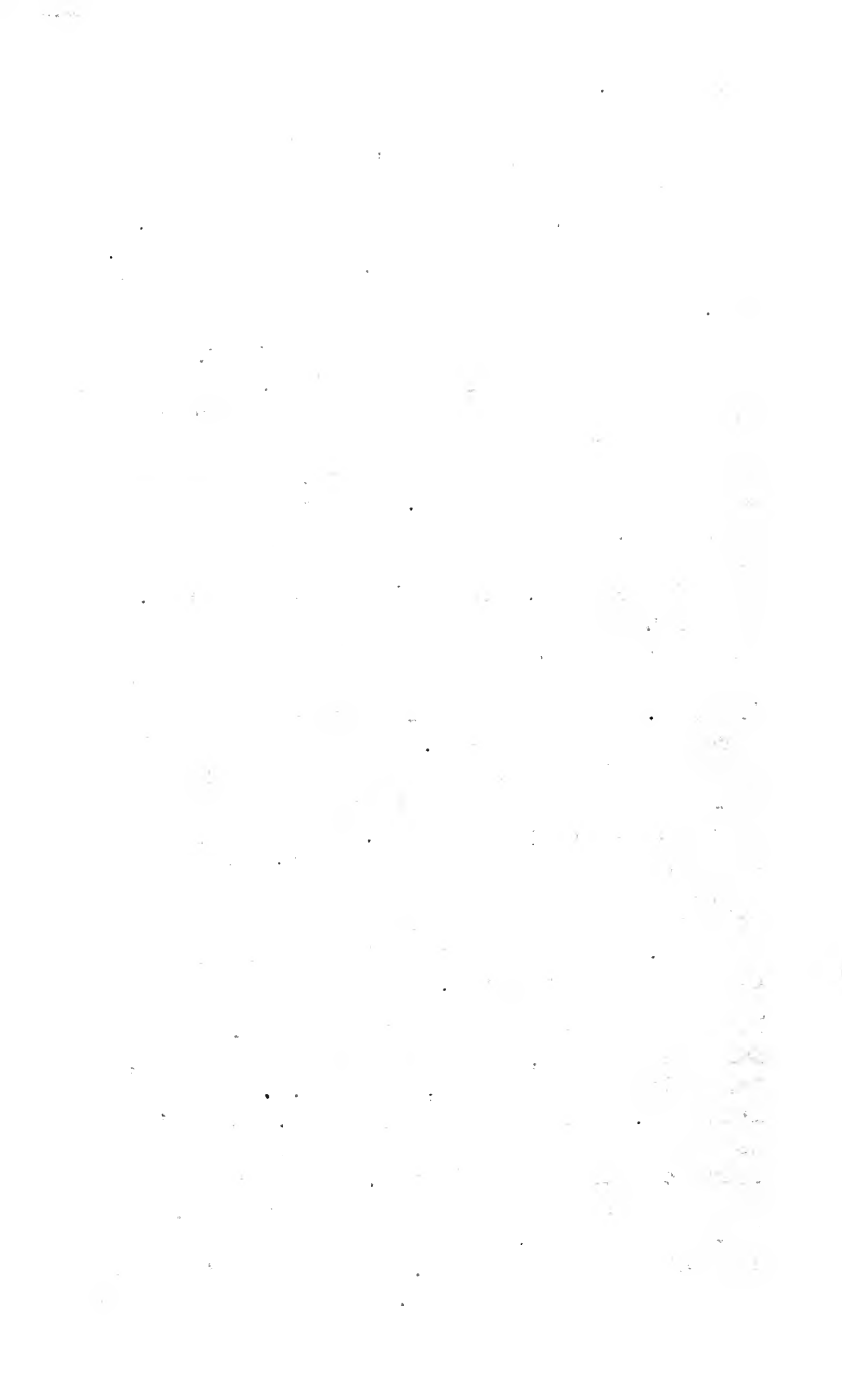
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a letter from St. Michael's College this morning telling us of the death of Father Joseph Dillon, a Basilian Father in Texas, who has had a heart condition for some time. I know you will remember him in your prayers too.

Yesterday was the Feast of All Saints, but over here they dedicate that day to the souls. Everybody right down to the baby turns out to the cemetery in the afternoon to pray at the graves of their relatives and to place flowers on and around the stone. The cemetery right near here, Montparnasse, was filled with people and the graves were a colourful array of fall flowers, mostly these huge "mums". The flower shops must do a great business for there are few who enter the cemetery that do not have a freshly cut armful of beautiful flowers. Upon asking how this custom began I received two answers, one that the people like to think of their deceased as numbered among the saints and hence they honour them on November 1st; the other, that the 1st is a holiday whereas the 2nd is not; so the people are free to go to the cemetery on the holyday whereas they have to go to work on the 2nd. I guess in fact it is a combination of both these reasons.

Yesterday here in the parish church, Notre Dame de Travail, we had a Solemn High Mass, for which I was deacon, at 11 a.m.; and right after it, at 12 noon I said Mass. We don't go out into the city to different parishes this year like we did last. Any Sunday work that we have done here is in the church. It is not far to go, infact our residence is connected to the church, so one doesn't have so much as to go outside. Some of the rubrics



November 2, 1953

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that we learned in the Seminary undergo a slight modification at times; the main altar is so arranged that the Celebrant^{vt} faces the people, which arrangement changes things for the other ministers also. However the essentials are always the same which is consoling.

Thanks for your last letter, Mom. It was joyously received I assure you. A parcel from Anne also arrived Saturday which contained two grand pair of socks. Please tell her how thankful I am for them, and that I'll try to write soon. Perhaps you could pass this message on to her too, Mom; I know it is like an imposition to ask a further favour having just received one, but if possible I would like her to send me over an essay that I wrote for the University of Toronto. It is entitled "Spanish Theatre before Lope de Vega" and should be in the red wooden box among the collection of essays. Tell her not to spend long looking for it if it is not available at once, and should she find it to send it by ordinary mail. There is no hurry.

Today I received a dandy long letter from Joe in which he gave me a good account of his trip to Quebec. The description of the narrow fields, etc. brought back memories. It is a lovely drive though, and the visit to the three big shrines makes up for the distance that one has to come. You should try to arrange a trip down that way sometime despite what it might cost in time and money. In the springtime I imagine it would be wonderful.

I finally got my registration card for the Sorbonne, although it is only a temporary one.

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We have to wait close to six weeks for word to come back on the question of equivalences in degrees. However with this card I can attend all the lectures and enjoy the same privileges as the others. It is good until December 15, and I think by that time we should have some definite word. We go to our first class tomorrow, five of them as a matter of fact. I intend to take a jaunt over that way this afternoon on my trusty bike and located the rooms where the lectures are given. The university is so big one could spend the whole period searching for the right room.

Last Saturday I had a surprise visit from a Lindsay boy, Mike Lahayne (I'm not sure if that is the correct spelling). We had a great chat together here in my room, and then walked over to his hotel. He was leaving the next morning for London. It was a treat to speak English again for a while; it still comes much more readily than the French. He had just completed a tour by bus through part of Sapin, so we compared notes as it were. He returns to Canada next year I believe.

Hope Aunt Kate is feeling well. You mentioned the question of the stipends for the Masses, and the delay is quite alright. Any time she wishes is fine with me. As a matter of fact I am glad of a few weeks as I have about 50 intentions from the Seminary that Father Hubert Coughlin, my Superior, sent me recently. So it will take a while to say them.

The weather is kind of chilly here at the moment, though nowhere near frost. Most of the leaves are gone from the trees and only the tougher fall plants like chrysanthemums

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have any bloom left. The sky is overcast most of the time, although occasionally the sun appears for a short visit in the morning. One is always wise to wear a raincoat for almost any day can produce rain before nightfall. My health is good so far, thanks be, and though not addicted to it exactly, I can take their wine more easily now at meals. That's all there is to drink on the table so you are sort of forced into it.

Better close now. God love you.

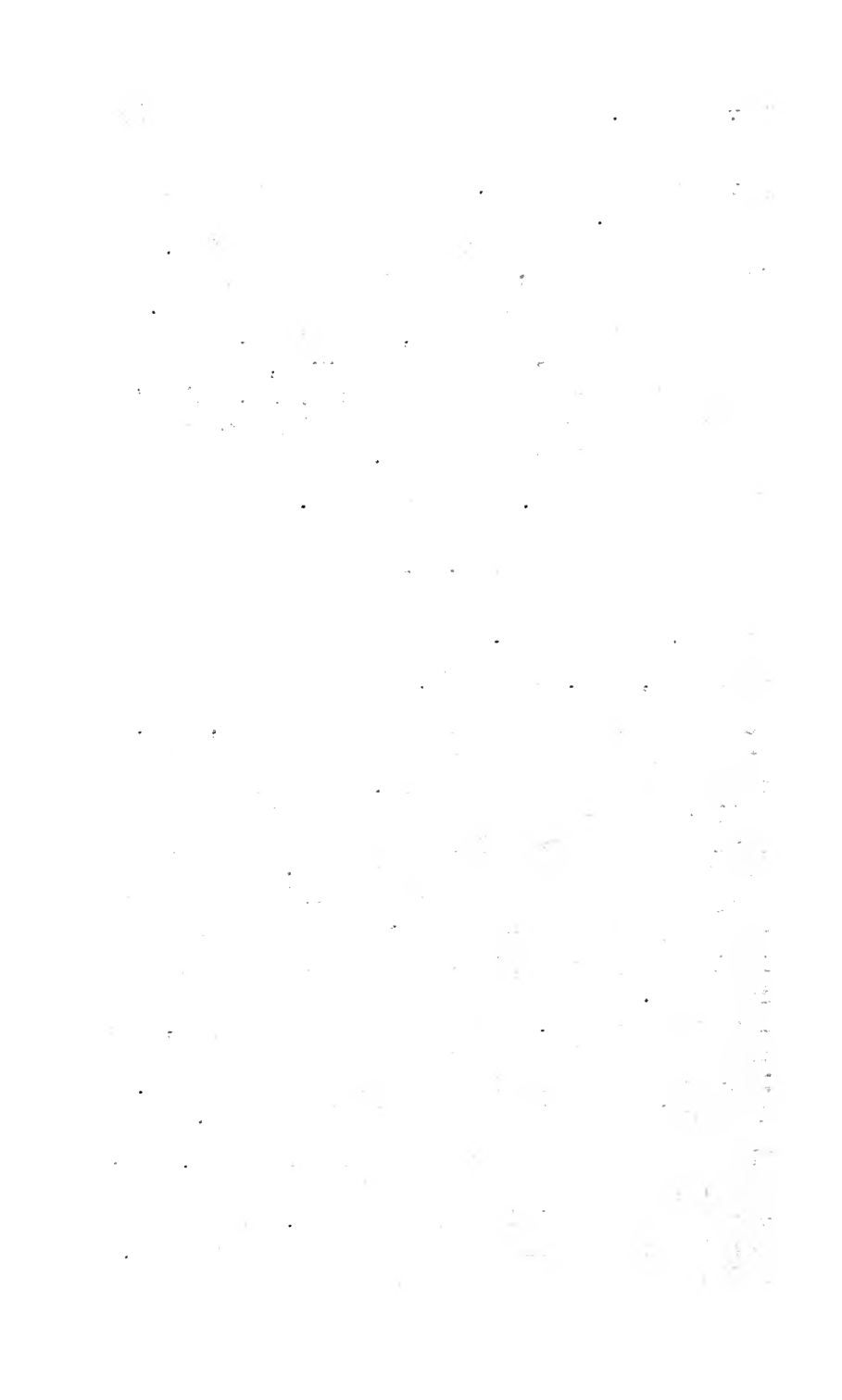
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Monday, November 9, 1953

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

Your good letter arrived this morning, Mom, and no need to tell you how delightful it was to see it there in the box. We have a large mail box on the stairway here inside the house divided into several compartments by reason of the large number of residents; the section that interests Father Dick Donovan and myself is marked "Les Révérend Pères Canadiens" so it is always a delight that we see something in there. You mentioned the box you sent and I eagerly await. It has not arrived yet, but that may not be surprising because even a letter sent by ordinary mail takes 16 days. A parcel may well take a little longer.

The weather here is very nice right now. Today for example it is bright and almost warm enough to go out in a light coat. In the morning it is cold and again in the evening, but if the sun has a chance at all it turns



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out rather nice for the afternoon. I think there was likely ^{8°}first this morning on the outskirts of the city but none in here. From your letter I imagine it is a bit colder "chez vous" or better "chez nous".

The word has not come back from the Department of Education; it may take a few weeks yet. They are very slow about such things. But I am not losing any time over it; I continue to follow courses that will be necessary no matter what the answer may be. I am beginning to find out that the system of education over here is quite a bit different from what I have been used to. It would take quite some time to explain all the differences; we'll save that for when we can do it together. But in general they stress intense and rigid concentration on a relatively small amount of matter whereas in Toronto they cover much more but in less detail. The example that comes to my mind at the moment is that of the 17th century author, Racine. Three years ago I took a course on him which included a study of all his plays, 14. Here this year they are giving a course on the same author and spending the whole year on just one of his plays. By the end of the year that one play is so thoroughly studied that the student is (or is supposed to be) well enough trained to go on himself and study the others. I'm not ready to say at the moment which is the better method. I only know that the latter is somewhat new to me, and it will take a bit of time to get onto the system of close analysis. One has to be almost a literary chemist. It will come though.

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Sunday we had a visit from a Basilian Father from Annonay, southern France. He is from the house where our community was originally founded, but as you know they separated about thirty years ago. The difference now between them and us is that we have the three vows whereas they are still considered as secular priests, although teaching fulltime in their college. He came up to Paris to write an exam again that he missed the first time back in June. If he is successful he receives the same degree that I am after, the Licence ès Lettres. On the order of his Superior he, Father René Robert, invited us down to their place for Christmas. We hope we can take him up on it, if not for the 25th, at least for a few days later. He is a very fine chap, about our own age, and of course of particular interest being a Basilian. There are about fifteen of them in all and apparently having a hard enough time of it to stay in existence. Their vocations are very few; but they are not alone there. Scarcity of vocations is pretty general all over France.

Well folks, I better get at the books here in front of me. It gives us a great assurance to know that you keep up the good prayers every day for us. That keeps us going, believe me. Best to one and all; wish I could write to each but there just doesn't seem to be the time.

* * *

Tuesday, 6:30 p.m. November 17, 1953

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

Weekly greetings even though a day late. I intended to write every Monday, but I find

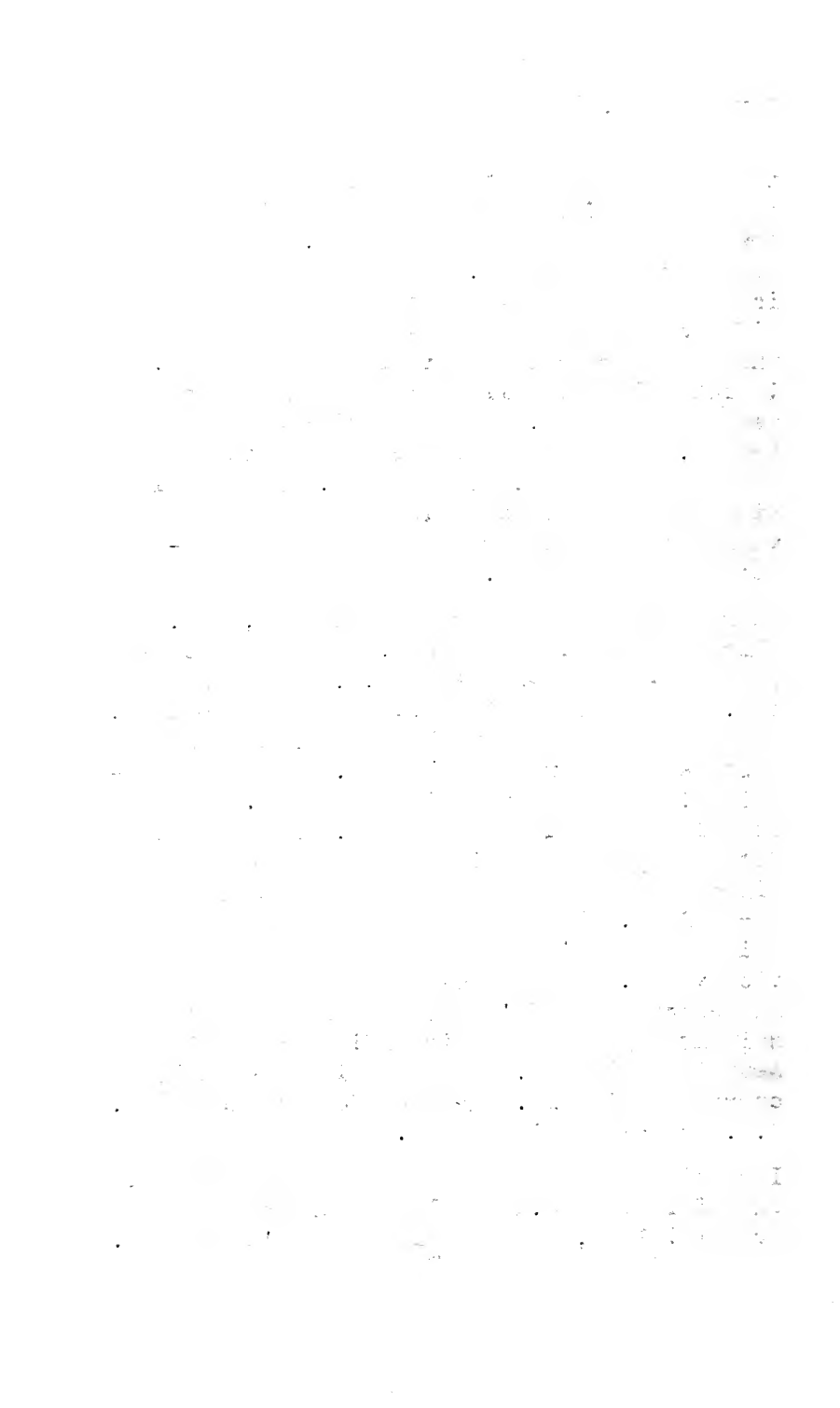
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that five hours of lectures take up most of the day and leave me too beat out at night to compose anything comprehensible. I decided to switch to Tuesday, but I find now that it is no better; I have just come back from the fifth class now which may explain the lack of unity and logic that this letter may have. So it looks like I will have to transfer to Wednesday next week. Maybe it will work out better. The rest of the week in fact is not so heavy as the first two days. I guess in figuring out the schedule they figured we would be good and fresh after a weekend - not always the case.

Thanks for your most welcome letter, Mom, which I received on Monday. It was accompanied by one from Father E.J. McCorkell too, who wrote about certain courses to take, and who mentioned your having won the big prize at the Auxiliary bridge. My congratulations! You were very lucky indeed. I hope it will be of some use to you, although it does seem a bit ironical for one who has mixed good food for many a year to win a food mixer. I should think you would be able to teach it a few tricks rather than vice versa. Father McCorkell mentioned that he personally didn't know how it worked; he said it was there in his office at the time awaiting delivery, which he might possibly carry out himself. He goes down to see Msgr. J.V. McCauley quite often.

I received the package Anne sent towards the end of last week, and please tell her how grateful I am, even though I haven't written.



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It is very welcome, and stood the trip quite well. All was perfectly intact on arrival and I had no duty to pay. Yours has not come yet, but that doesn't mean that it is lost or damaged. Parcels are more difficult to predict as to time than letters.

I'm glad to hear the snaps arrived and that you find them interesting. I brought the camera in to have it repaired several weeks ago. The shutter was not ^Hclosedly ^{IN}properly every time. Sometimes it would work well and others it would not. I went over to retrieve it last week, and before paying for it I gave it a few tries with my eye to the back. It was just the same as before much to the confusion of the personnel in the repair shop. I didn't want to accuse them of not having touched it in the meantime but I gave them to understand that should the same be ^{THE}case when I came in a week's time there would be trouble. Turning my back on a bunch of bewildered clerks I stormed out of the shop pulling my beret down on my head to stem as it were a rising temperature. The camera is here in my room now, all ready to go supposedly. It remains to be seen. If the first film does not turn out 100% ...!

Remembrance day was kept over here in grand style. It was a whole holiday everywhere, schools as well as stores. The militia marched down the Champs-Élysées to place a wreath on the tomb of the Unknown Soldier. I missed the parade, however. I was inside the theatre Marignan at the time watching Quo Vadis which was played for all the clergy gratis that morning. The picture was the same CB Demille



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production but the sound track was changed to French conversation. I thought it a wonderful spectacle. Nero is exceptionally well done, and Saint Paul too. I think he steals the show from St. Peter.

It is a little colder over here now, but not freezing. Most of the days are heavily clouded over and much cold dampness prevails in the air. It is a kind of miserable climate as a matter of fact and even the Parisians admit this. In spring they say it is much better.

Well, I would like to write at greater length, but many things call. Best to one and all.

* * *

Thursday, November 25, 1953.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

You really should have received this a day sooner if I had kept to my word, but a number of various items kept me from writing yesterday. Among them a banquet last night in honour of a Jesuit Father, Père Panici, noted preacher at Notre Dame, who was to give a conference in the parish hall later in the evening. The meal was very good, but lasted a bit longer than supper usually does.

The heavy fogs you asked about in your letter, Mom, have prevailed here for over two weeks now, though not so dense as in England. The Parisians are beginning to wonder just when the heavy grey lid is going to be lifted from the sky, and that is to say nothing of what

the "non-Parisians" are wondering! One of these days a good breeze will scatter the clouds and permit the sun to brighten things up again. Otherwise the weather is about the same, cool and very humid, but not freezing. Your Indian Summer makes us envious.

The new roof on the house will be a great improvement and comfort. You can listen to the rain pattering on it now with the assurance that it is not finding its way in here and there to spoil parts of the walls or ceiling. I hope the furnace is in good shape and that you have lots of fuel for it to guard against the winter's chill. Don't spare on the wood or coal for your health is worth far more than what can be bought. Poor Mary Gunn, Lord have mercy on her, used to have to count every piece of coal, and I think the lack of warmth accounted for a good number of the colds and flu that both she and we contracted.

Aunt Kate's condition must indeed be a worry and trial for you all. It is hard to see one you have known so well in such a state of mind. I think your analysis of her case is pretty accurate, Mom; she has been alone too long with her own thoughts and worries. But as you add, God is sending this trial for His own good reasons, and our prayers must accompany it that she will bear it.

Her conviction that prayer is of no use and that she is lost forever is certainly serious if she knows what she is saying. But I don't know how a person who has led as good a life as she could say such things and be in her right mind. She has always been, to prayer

FAITHFUL

November 25, 1953

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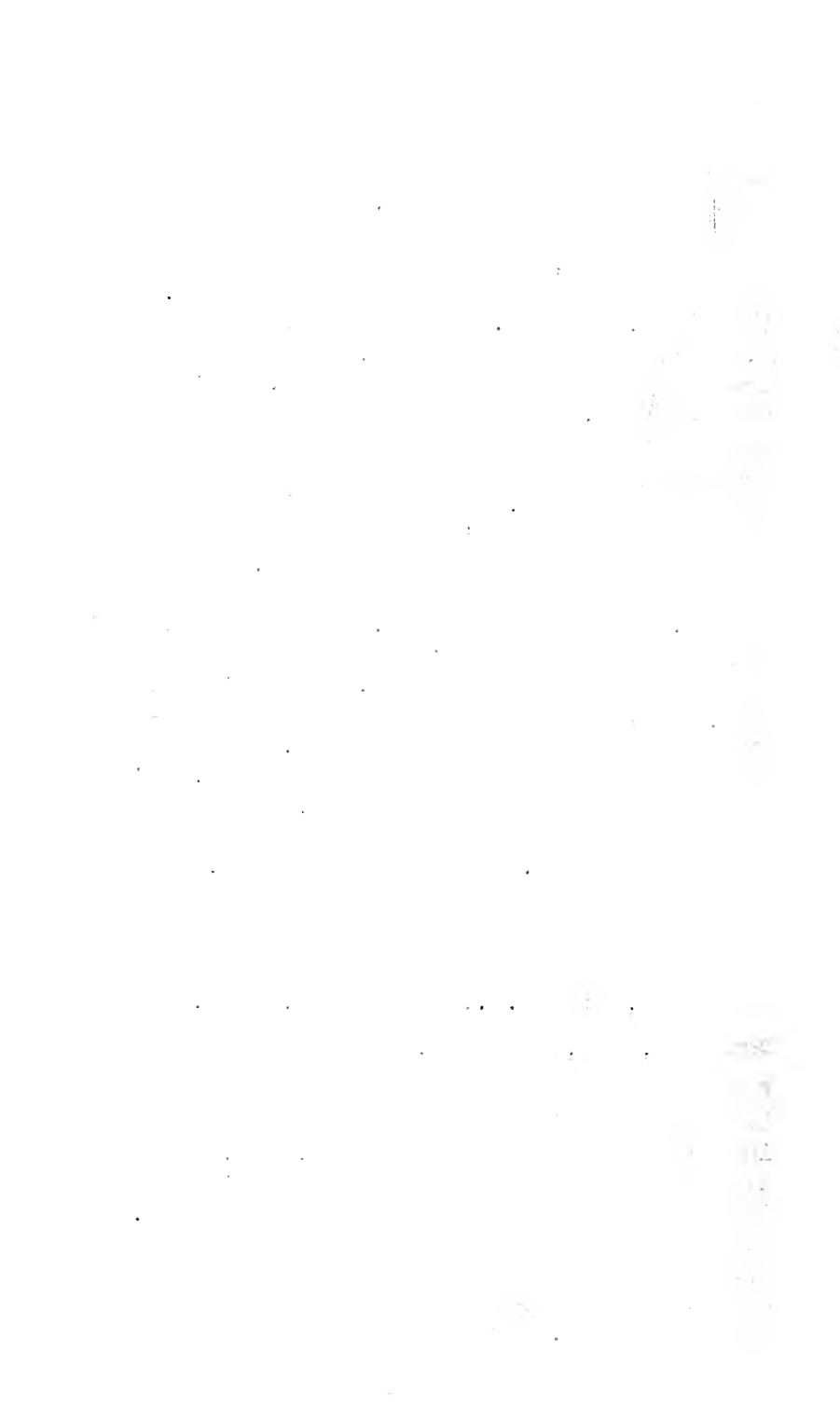
all through her life and has always assisted at Mass whenever she could. Such a record of prayer in the past is surely a proof that she knew its value, and it only seems reasonable that she should still be of that opinion. So it may be, as Msgr. McAuley says, that she is not reasoning perfectly now, and is therefore not responsible for what she says. It's very hard to know, for such people often have very lucid moments when they are normal and give you to believe they are perfectly sincere in all that they say. Treatments might help her although they wouldn't want to be too violent for she is not very robust at best. You could certainly get medical advice on the matter, and should in fact. In any case, don't feel in the least responsible for her present statements or point of view, and don't let it worry you. Our prayers for her final perseverance will certainly be heard, even though she may think them and her own useless. I'll be anxious to hear further news, and in the meantime will certainly keep her in my Mass in a special way. Best of all to all.

* * *

Wednesday, 6:30 p.m., December 2, 1953.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

Perhaps I should wait till tomorrow morning to send you this as something tells me there is a letter on the way from you, Mom. However, if I get it finished before supper I'll send it along to make it arrive one day earlier. Not that it will be such a remarkable manuscript that the sooner it reaches its destination, the better, but I know you expect some word regularly.



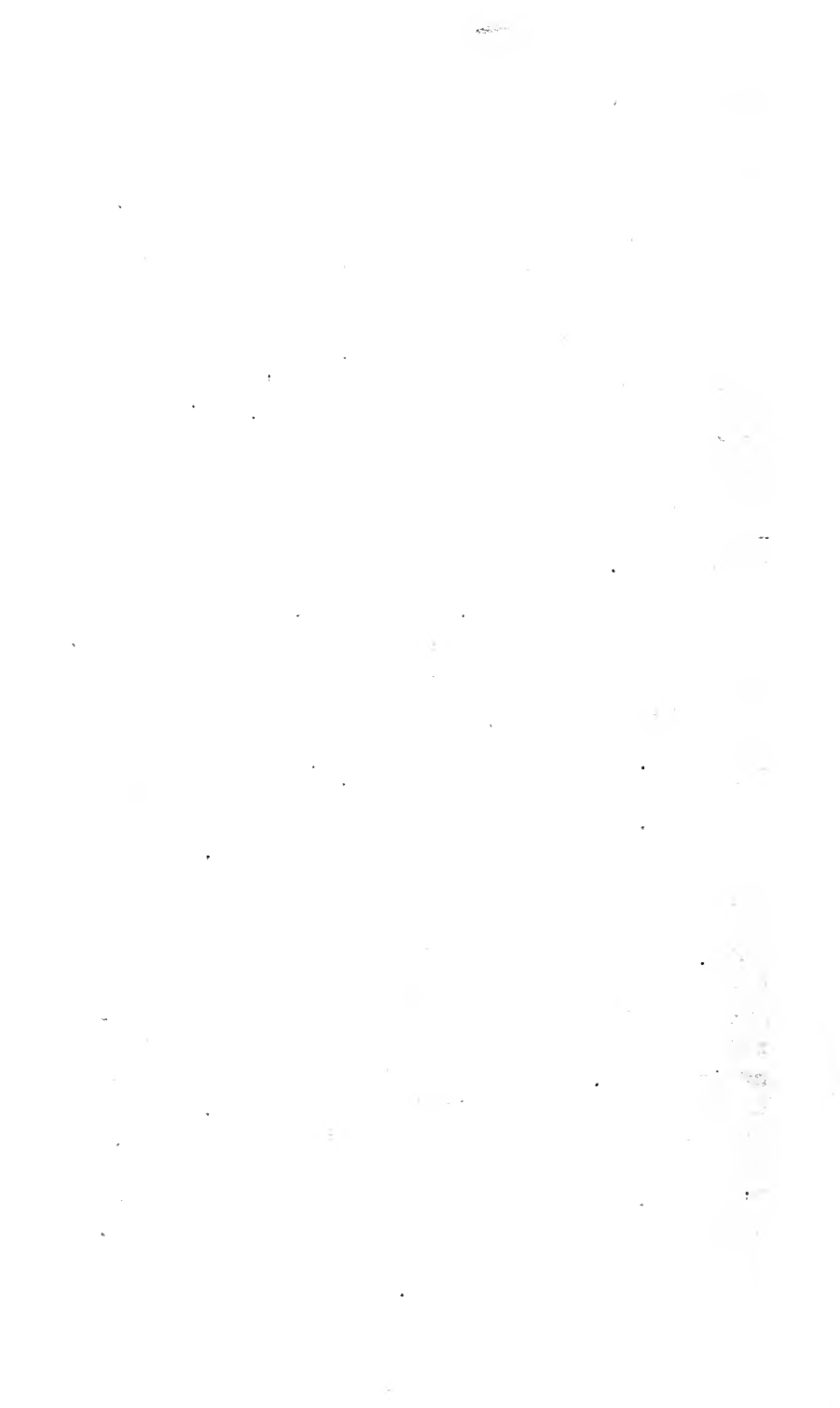
December 2, 1953

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First of all let me thank you for the grand parcel which arrived in A-1 shape last week. It was a real treat opening it and even more so now enjoying its contents. You chose very well; the articles are all most acceptable even to the Post on top which is putting me up to date on the local news. I notice the postage cost you quite a bit so I'll not expect you to send things very often. I'm sort of in the same fix over here; there are any number of things I could send you of interest, but the mailing charges are almost prohibitive - sometimes more than the cost of the article being sent.

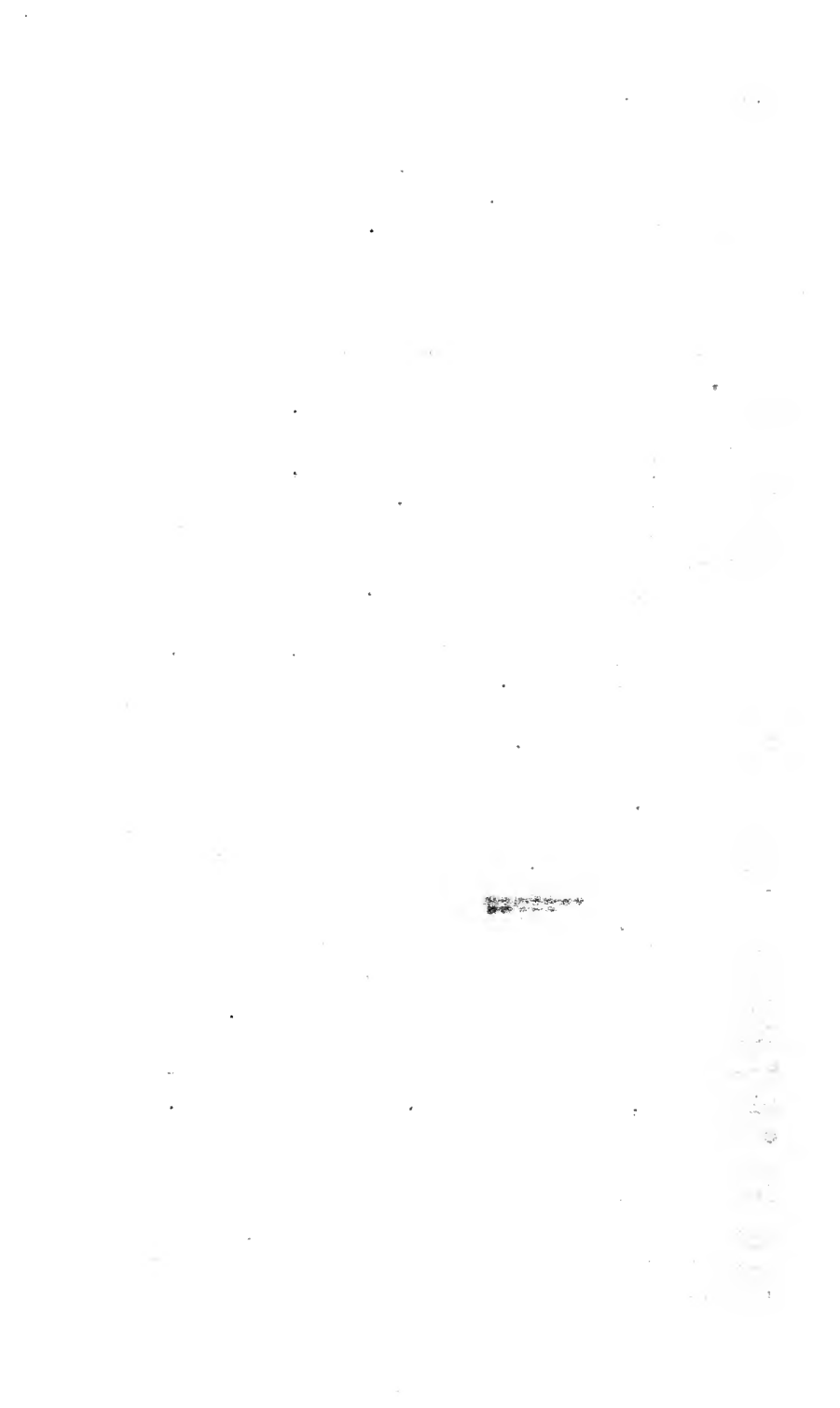
Our great fog lifted, thanks be, and we are blessed with a few days of summer-like weather. Today it was very nice, although I noticed tonight on coming home from class that a heavy mist was settling down silently but quite perceptibly. Throughout December, January and February they tell us we can't look for much sunshine. Then Spring is supposed to break forth in all its glory and brightness.

The thought struck me the other day that so far I have not told you much about Paris itself. Perhaps I should wait until I get to know it a little better; but then I might never arrive at the point of telling you anything for it is so big and has so many things of interest. The best thing^c might be to mention some aspect of it in each letter. Some of them I may have mentioned to you already, but if so you will forgive my faulty memory, I'm sure. In general the city has some sections that are very beautiful and attractive. It is these that one sees in the travel bureau information publications. ^There are a good



number of areas like that, and they are truly a pleasure to visit. I will get around to describing them in due time. Right now I feel I should begin with telling you of the section with which I am more familiar, and which in no way finds its way into the colorful publicity bulletins. It is a poor section, I mean the people are poor and hence this shows up in their dwellings. There are no individual houses such as you have in residential sections "chez vous", each with its own lawn and backyard. The houses here are all connected together in a hodge-podge fashion that is hard to visualize unless you actually visit the district. I would call them buildings rather than houses; they are of an infinite variety of shapes, height, and general appearance. They go straight up from the sidewalk which is sometimes no wider than two or three feet. Little round tiled chimneys protude from the heterogeneous roofs in abundance. It would give one to believe that every room in the building has its own pipe-hole and chimney. When these all get puffing varying shades of smoke it is a pretty scene to be sure. The streets cut through this jumble of habitations at the strangest angles almost as though they weren't sure themselves just where they were going to end up. On the street level a section of little shops may begin anywhere and end just as abruptly - a wine shop, a barber shop, a delicatessen, a café which is equivalent to our tavern and which sells fuel for stoves as well as that for people!

Quite often a wall with a huge last-century door in it will be hiding a spacious opening in front of a school or religious house or



other public building. You would never suspect from the street that the inner part existed. There is the greatest variety in what you find as you walk along. The more strictly shopping districts have stores of all types of course, and which display their wares right out on the sidewalk on long tables or shelves. Some of the fruit stores even have little carts out in the street loaded down with all kinds of fruit, vegetables and flowers. Very often too these little carts are private endeavours, with no connection at all to the store in front of which they are stalled. These latter type usually have a great big fat lady sitting beside them hollering out her particular wares.

The manner the Parisians have for keeping the streets clean is rather interesting. At almost every corner down on the curb there is a water faucet that one of the street sweepers turns on when he comes along. This pourf out water which runs along the curb at a great rate. He with his broom (made of wooden twigs by the way) sweeps all the papers etc. in to the stream of water which carries them along to the first sewer opening. This seems to be the arrangement for all the streets in the whole city, and every day, rain or shine or fog the sweepers are out bright and early clearing things away.

Well that is a glimpse of the more realistic side of Paris. It is all quite surprising when one first comes upon it, but after a while it becomes very customary. I find myself at home in it already, although I must confess it did take a few weeks. More next time on another aspect.

December 4, 1953

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Friday, 6 p.m. 4 - 12 - '53

Dear Mom and all,

Just a note this time to enlighten you on the books from Landy's. Ordered them during the summer hoping they would come before I left. One copy is for Aust and Jean and the other for Greg and Nora. Both Greg and Aust asked me if there was any book from which they could draw stories on the lives of the saints. These short accounts in the small Butler were the nearest I could come to what they had in mind. They are little gifts to each of them that I hope will help them to teach the children something about the "real men and women", the heroes of the Church.

With regard to the bill you should not have to pay it, in fact, they should not have sent a bill with them. I left orders that the bill be sent to the Seminary Bursar, Rev. James S. Kelly, CSB, 95 St. Joseph St., Toronto. I left money with him to pay for the books; so if they sent the bill with them you can just forward it along to Father Kelly. He knows about it already.

Glad to hear you had a visit from Father E.J. McCorkell. He is very friendly and entertaining. We will be sorry to lose him as Superior General this July ('54) - his term will be up then.

Hope Aunt Kate is showing some improvement. Try not to worry too much about here. You are always in my prayers.

* * *

December 10, 1953

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Thursday, 5 p.m., Dec. 10/53.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

Not having had any classes this afternoon and being somewhat wearied by now with studying I decided to turn to something much more pleasant and write you a few lines, which lines I really should have gotten off to you yesterday. This letter will probably meet yours on the way, Mom, at least I hope it does, since you know how I look forward to hearing from you. Hope you are all well. Any cold weather yet since the spell of Indian Summer?

It is still quite mild here. We had rain most of the day and now it is darkening up due to the heavy sky overhead, right overhead I might say. December is an unpredictable month over here, so I'm told, which means I guess that we can expect anything at anytime. From what the papers report it is unusually mild all over Europe; some of the ski resorts in the Alps are afraid there is not going to be enough snow during the Christmas holidays to attract the expected number of tourists. One of the priests here, who is chaplain at a "lycée" (high school) is taking a group of about 50 boys to the mountains in Austria during the holidays. If there isn't any snow for skiing and tobogganing he and the lads are going to be pretty disappointed, particularly since the round trip costs them about \$40 each.

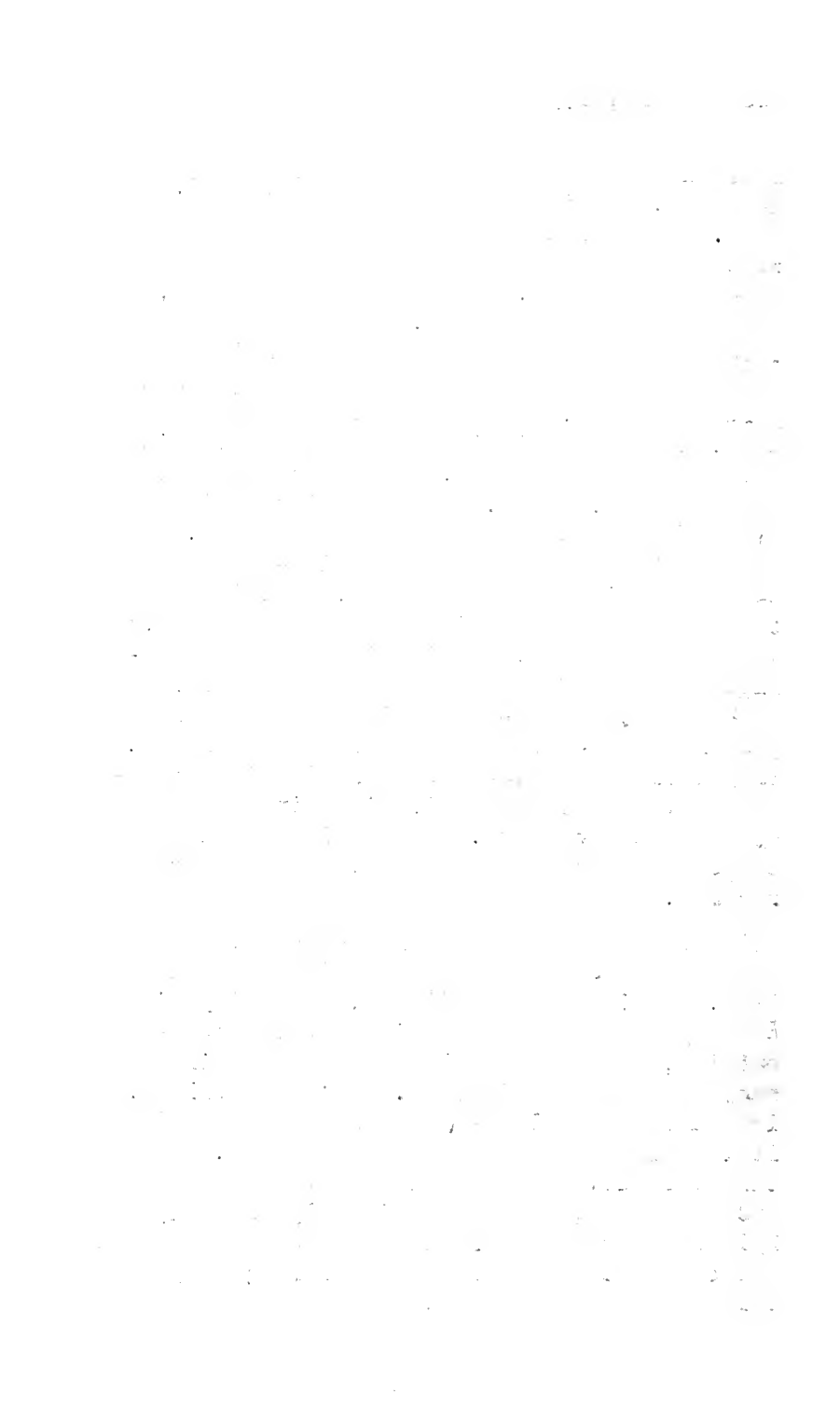
Father Dick Donovan and I are hoping to go down to the south of France to visit the Frnech Basilians there. They will not be at Annonay, their normal location, but at a

house in some small town ^Rfather south, I just forget the name of the place now. We hope to leave on the evening of the 25th and arrive there the next day about noon. We don't plan to spend the night on the train, but rather in Lyons where ^{we} will say Mass the next morning and continue the journey by daylight. We will have about nine days free so we may get to some other cities down that way too, such as Avignon, Marseille and Nice. The itinerary is rather undecided yet as we haven't got the necessary permission from our Superior in Toronto to go. However, it is not likely that he will say no, at least that is what we are telling ourselves. For Midnight Mass we plan to go to Notre Dame here in Paris, that is if there is room for us. I intend to get a letter off to the archpriest there this afternoon asking him for the OK on it. We will say our three Masses privately here at the church later on that morning. At least as far as I know that is the way it will be.

We have begun the Year in honour of Mary. Our confreres in Rome expected to attend the opening at Saint Mary Major's if it was at all possible. It must have been grand. We marked the opening of the Marial Year here with a Solemn High Mass at 7:30 p.m. The people turned out pretty well to attend it. It seems that the evening is more convenient for them than the morning. The 8th of December is not a holyday of obligation here, a fact which surprised me somewhat, nor is January 1st, nor the 6th. Ever since ^{the} Concordat between Napoleon and the Vatican there have been much fewer holydays in France.

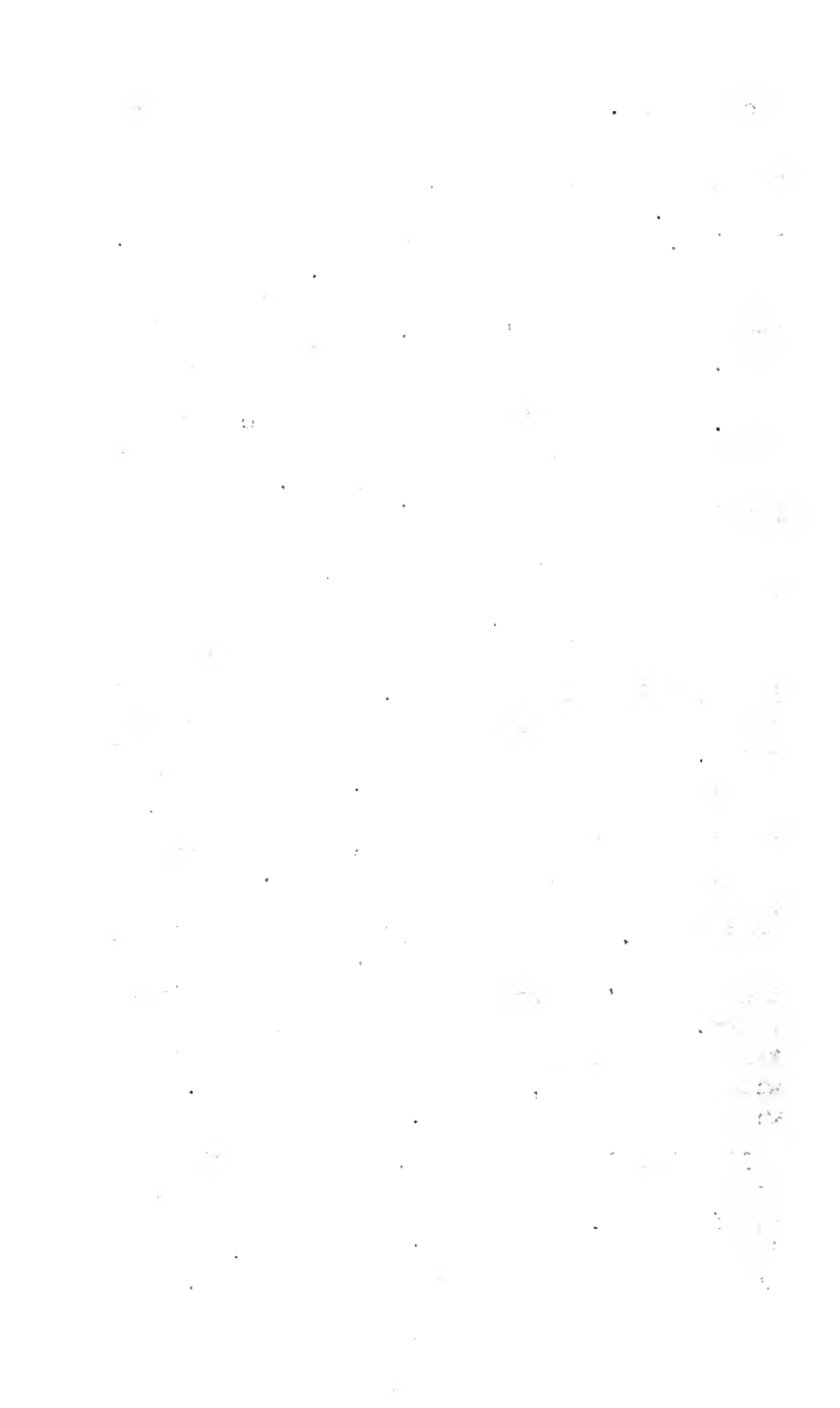
I finally got registered officially at the Sorbonne. It is a complicated business indeed. From what I can see the French are strong on theory and speculation but when it comes to practice, I mean being practical, they are at quite a loss. In Toronto we went through the process of registration in one day and without too many hard feelings on the part of anyone, but here it takes days and days, and no one is in good humour after it all or even through it. 101 papers have to be presented, and all of them stamped in a different office in different buildings. And of course there is the usual line-ups of students doing the same thing, that is going through the process, in every office where one is required to go. It is with a sigh of relief that one finally issues from the last desk with the hard-earned lecture card and your name somewhere in the University files. They tell me a second registration is necessary at the time of examinations in order to be admitted to write. I hope it is not as complicated as the first one, nor as nerve racking.

While on the subject of the Sorbonne, I can make it the centre of description for this time. It is a huge building, something like the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto from the outside, though much older and hemmed in by many more other buildings. It's central part is a large chapel with a prominent dome over it that can be seen for some distance. This chapel is evidence that the University was once Catholic, but now it is only an empty hall where visitors and tourists are conducted. The classrooms are all pretty large; they call them amphitheatres. They vary in size



but the average one would hold about 400 students. They are quite dark and dreary-looking, in need of redecoration I would say. The benches are plain hard wood, curving around the room and descending in gradation toward the teacher's desk. Large though they seem, they are nonetheless much too small for the number of students who try to get in to them. It is an obvious fact in almost every one of them that the registration is much beyond the capacity of the building. So the result is that if you don't arrive well in advance of the class you will have to stand at the back or along the sides. As you can imagine the teacher has very little contact with the students although one has the right to go and see the professor after the lecture in a little reception room. It is often worth your life to get in and out of these lecture rooms. There is only one entrance to most of them, and it is quite narrow. When the time comes to change classes all the students on the inside start shoving out, and the crowd waiting to get in start shoving in. For a few moments then between lectures it is really ridiculous. All the learning and intelligence of the great masters that have gone through there haven't succeeded in solving the situation. I being much less intellectual am tempted to go over some night after hours with a few tools, among them a good axe, and widen the doors somewhat.

Well folks I better scoot. It is drawing near to 6 pm and I want to get this in the evening mail. Am anxious to hear of some improvement in Aunt Kate's condition. Be assured that you are ever in my prayers.



December 17, 1953

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Thursday, December 17, 1953.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

It will be nearing the great feast of Christmas likely when you get this so I'll make it my vehicle of best wishes. The card that I sent by ordinary mail may not arrive on time, and any way it is not much of a Christmas card. They are hard to find over here and amazingly expensive when once found. The practice of sending them seems to be an English or American custom that hasn't spread to the continent.

I hope you are all well. Thanks very much for your last letter, Mom. It is good news to hear there seems to be some improvement in Aunt Kate. We sure hope it will continue. I was quite surprised to hear of Marg Fitzpatrick's death; it must have come as quite a blow to the other members of the family. Aust gave me an inkling of her condition in his letter but I had no idea it was so advanced. It is things like that that make one a bit apprehensive before opening a letter from abroad. I will certainly give her a special memento in my Mass, and please tell Jimmy or Sister DeSales that should you see them soon.

Our weather of late has been remarkable for its goodness. We have had no fog for two or three weeks and no rain either; in fact the sun has been out beautifully for most of December so far. I'm afraid the buds are going to be tempted to start sprouting. I guess you are having similar weather. Maybe the tropical

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zone is shifting position and there will be no need to go to Florida for the winter in a few years.

It hardly seems possible that we should be approaching so nearly to the date of Christmas. I'm sure I don't know where the Fall went; it has been the shortest term I can remember since entering the Community. I suppose the variety and rapidity of events has shortened the days as it were. Our lectures stop on the 23 and begin again on January 4. They got under way so late, November 1st, that I hardly feel entitled to holidays, but then when I look at the second term stretching right to the first week of July, I logically deduce that a breather now won't do any harm at all. At Easter, too, I believe we have some time off; just how much I don't know. Father Dick Donovan and I had planned to go to Notre Dame, for Midnight Mass, but it looks as though we will not be able to make it. He has been chosen to say Mass at midnight in one of the Convents here. So far I am left free but may also be called upon. If not I may go over to St. Eustache where they have a renowned boys' choir. I'll be letting you know after Christmas how things went. Our little trip down to see the Basilians in southern France will likely take us out of Paris until January 3rd, so you will understand if the letters are a bit irregular for a while.

Tomorrow night all the Catholic students at the Sorbonne are making a pilgrimage in honour of Our Lady from the University up to Sacred Heart Church in the north of the city. I will



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join in though it means a rather late retiring hour. It will be a walk of about two hours. We are to pray and sing hymns on the way and then assist at Mass upon arrival. The march leaves the "Place de la Sorbonne" at 8 p.m.; just when the pilgrims "chez nous" return, I have no idea.

Speaking of students there was quite an affair the day before yesterday at the University. About 3,000 students had a big rally, speeches etc. in the open air, after which they proceeded to walk in a body to the Houses of Parliament. They were protesting against the inadequate budget granted by the government for the amelioration of the educational deficiencies. Such a crowd blocked the traffic on one of Paris' main boulevards which problem the police undertook to remedy. They went after the students rather ruthlessly, it seems for 30 of them were injured., some rather badly. The papers were full of it all today. There are pro's and con's, but one thing is sure - French tempers rise quickly.

Well let me wish one and all a very holy and happy Christmas. As you say we will be together in prayer and that is what counts. One of my three Masses on Christmas morning will be for you all.

* * *

Christmas Eve, December 24, 1953

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

I should really wait until after the great feast now to send you this letter in which I

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could describe how things went, but tomorrow looks like a full day while I have some spare time this afternoon. But in fact I am not sure when this will get under way to you because the post offices in Paris are on strike at the moment. We have received no mail for three days now, nor has anyone else, so if there are no deliveries I rather doubt if there are any pick-ups either.

Monday I received your good letter, Mom, and thanks very much for writing, also for the \$5 bill enclosed. That was very kind of you to send me that for the trip. You mentioned that there might be some difficulty in converting it into francs, but I assure you it is not hard. Both Canadian and American money are extremely well received over here, specially the former. I really think it is about the most valuable money in the world at the present time. The exchange offices are only too happy to buy Canadian bills. Thanks too for your best wishes and for a Merry Christmas. I'm sure it will be.

Tonight about 10 p.m. I am going over to the church of St. Eustache, mainly for the Mass, but also to hear the boy choristers there. They are supposed to be very good. We had planned to go over to Notre Dame, but since Dick (Father Donovan) couldn't come I decided not to go alone.

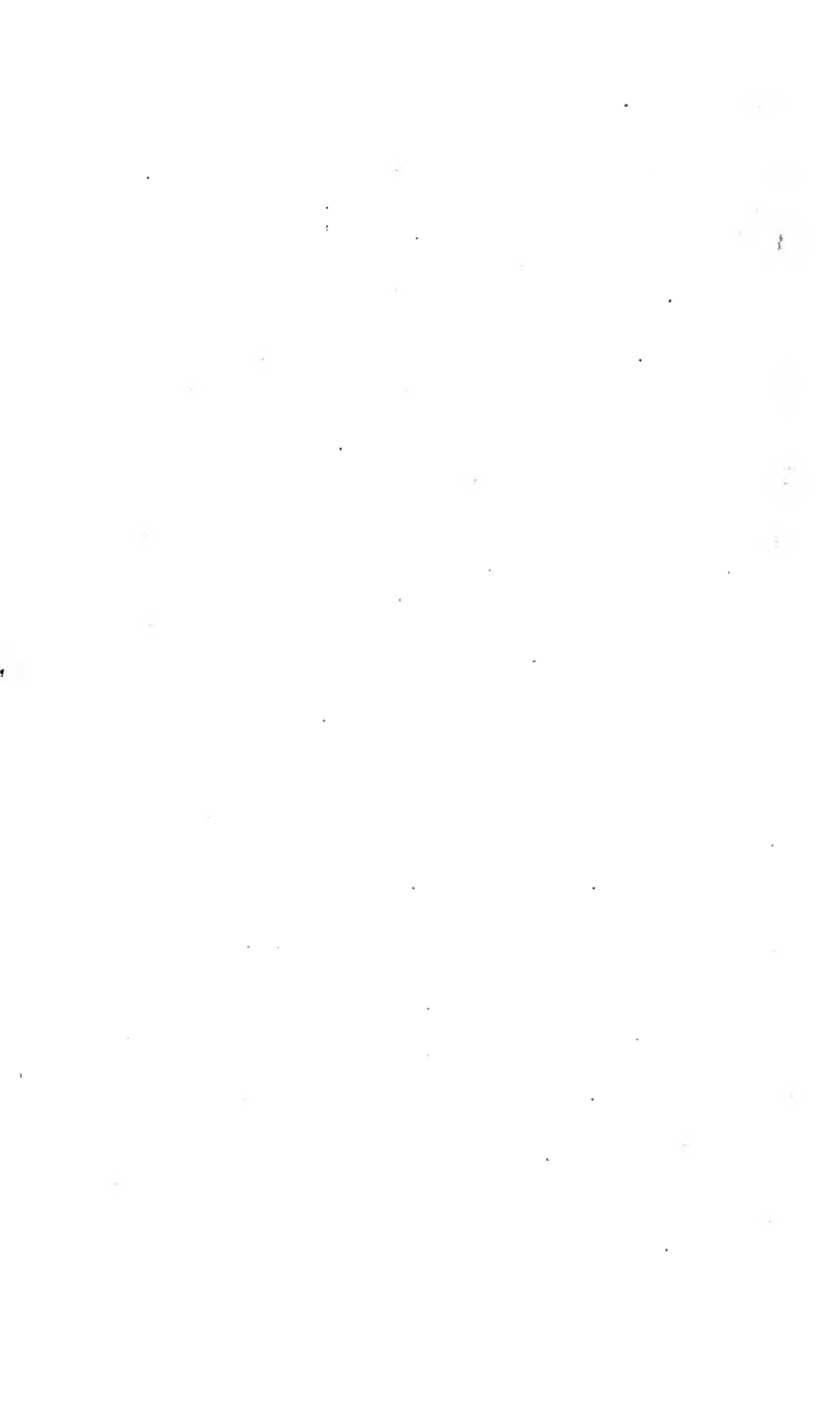
Our weather is not exactly what you would call wintry in the Canadian sense. It has been raining most of the afternoon. Hope it clears up before tonight as I intend to go over to St. Eustache by bike and rain is never joyously received on the top of a bicycle.

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Well France finally got herself a President, but not without quite an effort. It was all sort of disgraceful show, wasn't it? Most of them here seem to be pretty humiliated about it, and despite their patriotic feelings wonder just what will become of the country eventually. Of course the president is more or less of a figure head in the Republic; his position comes nowhere near that of the president of the United States. His election is almost a formality, as a matter of fact; but the manner in which it was carried out was indicative of dissension and hence weakness, it seems to me. The present strike touches us more personally. It too is a sign of instability and at the same time is somewhat inconvenient. If it lasts much longer there is going to be a great pile of mail to sort when the workers come back.

Since my last letter an event took place in which I participated and which has left me with some wonderful impressions, that was a pilgrimage to the basilica of the Sacred Heart in Montmartre. Between 8,000 and 9,000 Catholic students assembled last Friday night in front of the Sorbonne about 8 p.m. We walked in a long column through the streets up to the northern end of the city, with only one stop on the way, in front of Notre Dame Cathedral, where we all sang the Salve Regina at the top of our voices. Having once arrived in the basilica we chanted Matins and then assisted at a Solemn Mass. I shall never forget the power of those youthful voices as they alternated on the Psalms and hymns of the office and the Mass. They more than filled the huge



vaulted arches of that tremendous church. It gave me to believe that there is still some hope for the future of France if her leaders are to be taken from the midst of these apparently fervent pilgrims. The ceremony was over about 12:30 a.m., just in time to let us catch the last subway trains. I came home pretty fagged out, but very happy that I had taken part.

Well, folks, once more the very best wishes for the New Year to you all.

* * *

January 13, 1954

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Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

1. Narrates weather, tells of letter received.
2. Effects of mail strike. No sign of package sent.

Things are rolling again at the Sorbonne, in fact, a mention is made now and then of final exams in June. We keep our eyes more or less fixed on the latter part of that month when the year will come to an end, and leave us free for a good long summer. The system of examinations is quite different here. Though one has to prepare the whole year's work, that is, all the authors studied, only one author, and only one question on that author constitutes the exam. Since two courses make a full year, we have only two exams, and hence only two questions. It sounds a bit complicated but is really very simple. I'll be telling you more about it later on when the spectre becomes more imminent. In the meantime don't worry about my health, for I have been feeling fine, and expect that I can continue to do so, God willing. As you counsel, one can only do one's best at the studies, and that best has to be a prudent one.

4. Sent some photographs.

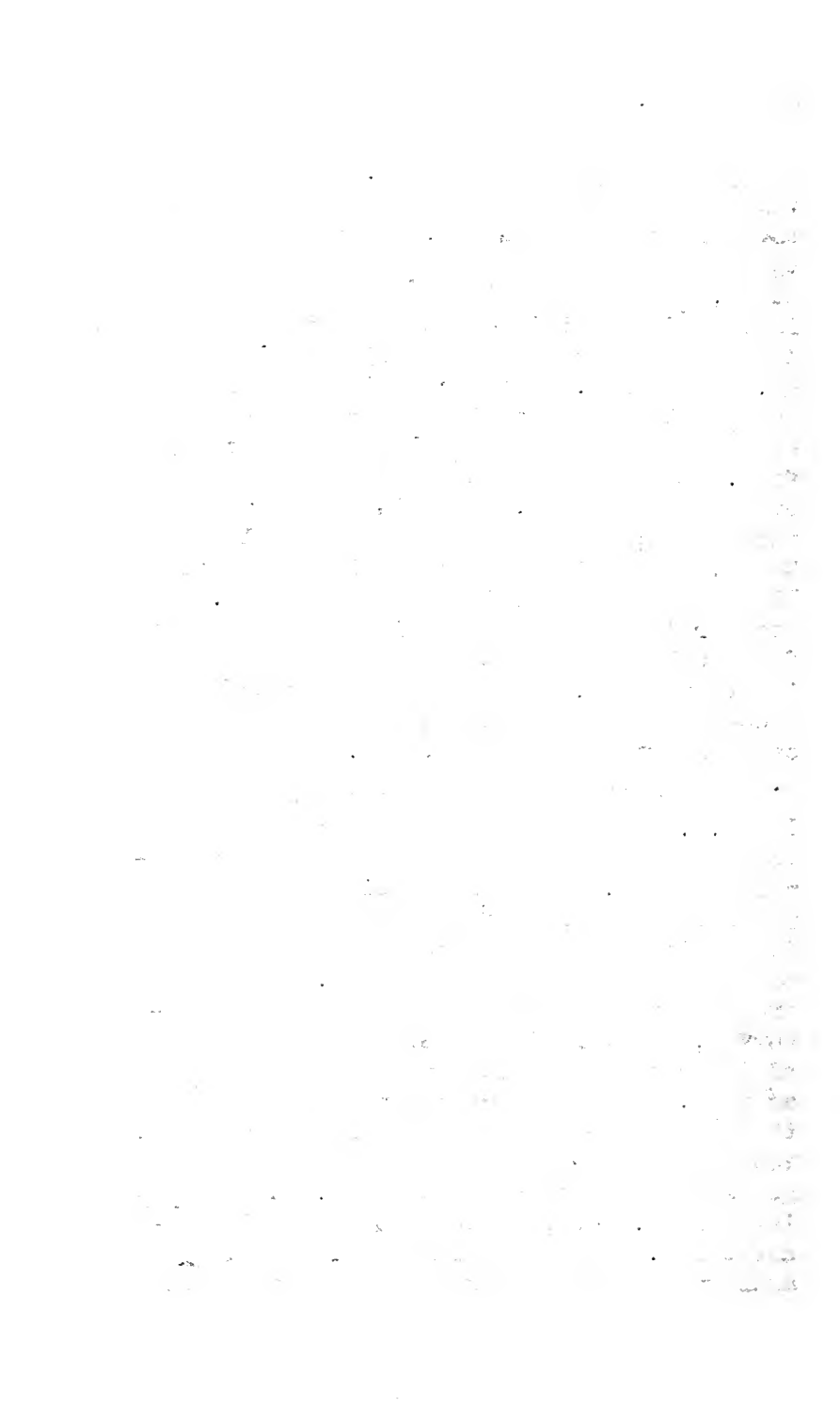
5. Promises to continue account of tour.

We left the Basilians early on the morning of December 28. The bus we had to catch went by a certain Café four miles away at 7:30 am, so in order to get Mass said, have breakfast (which really doesn't take very long over here), and get our things together we had to



be up with the first rooster. One of the villagers on his way to work brought us to the said café in his car. That day we touched on several small and interesting towns, each typical in its own way of what is called "le Midi" or southern central France. About noon we came to the city of Nîmes (about 85,000 people). After checking our bags and eating at a restaurant not far from the bus depot we proceeded to explore the place on foot. It was one of the windiest days I have ever lived through. We could hardly walk down the street; in fact at one moment I lost my beret, and it takes some little breeze to blow one of those things off your head. I was afraid it would roll like a little tire for blocks with me in soutane vainly trying to overtake it, but luckily it flopped over a couple of times after the manner of a pancake and was easily recovered.

Nîmes owes its origin to the Romans around 120 B.C. An aqueduct and a public fountain together with the huge arena still bear witness to them. A temple to Diana is still partially standing; some artisans were working on it when we visited it trying to restore or make safe a part of the roof. The huge arena or amphitheatre is extremely well preserved, and very impressive not only by reason of its size but of its symmetry and design as well. It is truly amazing the stone work that can be seen there down under the seats. You would wonder how in the world they ever got such huge stones into place, and so well into place, for it shows great care in construction. When the Romans built a place of amusement or entertainment they stopped at



nothing. We walked the whole afternoon visiting the spots marked out in our guide books, and then took the bus about 6 p.m. for Arles.

It was about 9 p.m. when we reached Arles so we sought out a reasonable hotel and stayed there overnight. The next morning we said Mass in the old old cathedral of Saint-Trophime, said to be the most beautiful church's in all southern France. It is the best example of Roman style in architecture, especially its cloister. The whole city (about 17,000 people) is again very Roman, so much so that it is called French Rome. It too has a huge arena in stone, though not so well preserved as the one at Nimes; the Arlois of course claim it is far superior, however.

Arles is the birthplace of a famous 16th century French poet, François Mistral. I don't know whether he is responsible for it or not, but the wind which I mentioned at Nimes, and which was just as strong at Arles, is called the "mistral". Apparently it blows during the winter every so often, and always for either three days or six days or nine; if it goes beyond three it will surely be six, and if perchance beyond six it will be nine - so the lady at the hotel told us. Another curious item along that line: the fastest train in the world runs between Paris and Marseille and is called also "Le Mistral".

Towards evening we climbed into a bus again and went on to Avignon (52,000 inhabitants - I happen to have the guide book here in front of me, hence the population figures - not my memory!). Since the distance is not far we

January 13, 1954

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arrived in time to get in on the last tour of the day through the Palace of the Popes, the most remarkable thing at Avignon. You probably know the history of this papal residence where one true Pope, Clement V, took refuge during civil uprisings in Italy in the 13th century and where a series of false popes also lived after his death. It is a magnificent building, and of tremendous dimensions. But I don't know how they ever heated it for it was as cold as a morgue the day we were there. There are no longer any furniture or furnishings in it: just one huge room or hall after another. When the guide explains what took place in the different parts it is more interesting than it would be if one were to go through it alone. I don't say that in praise of guides in general, however; usually they are a nuisance and detract from the beauty of one's first discoveries on first arriving at a place. But for certain monuments they are more or less indispensable, especially when one hasn't much time to find out for oneself. Later that night we boarded a train and went to Valence where we camped down for the night. We wanted to get as close as possible to Grenoble that day in order not to have too far to travel the next day.

Closes, promising to continue in next letter, with family greetings.

January 20, 1954

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36, rue Guilleminot
Paris 14^e, France.
Jan. 20, 1954

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

Happy Birthday, Dad! Though the greetings are late, I send them with all my best wishes, save the one wish that I could be there to celebrate it with you. If planes were more highly developed I could be there to have supper with you tonight, and would more than likely bring you a bottle or two of good Burgundy wine. But I guess wishes were ever thus.

2. Discusses weather in Canada.

3. Talks of winter in Paris.

Well, in our last letter we were just leaving Avignon, and I promised not to burden you much longer with the reading of this account, so we should pull into Paris again by the end of this one. It was dark when we boarded the train north out of Avignon and quite late when we arrived at Valence, about 75 miles distant and since we caught an early train out of Valence the next morning, I really can't describe the countryside or the city itself for the truth is we didn't see them. The day turned out beautifully as we proceeded to Grenoble, New Year's Day at that. The train runs through the Rhône valley and for miles to your left stretches a range of jagged and lofty mountains which in the morning sun against a blue sky background with its irregular line of snowy peaks is a delightful picture indeed. It was quite cold in that section with the result that we had to keep

January 20, 1954

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scraping the frost off the windows of the train in order to enjoy the magnificent winter scene.

We spent the rest of New Year's Day and that night in Grenoble. During the day we walked to the different points of interest mentioned in the "Blue Guide Book" which we read faithfully upon arrival in each city. The most exciting event of the day was our teleferic trip up to the top of a nearby mountain from which point we had a magnificent view, not only of the whole city, but of the surrounding mountains. Unfortunately the day was slightly cloudy at the time, but what we could see was unforgettable, nevertheless. That night for a bit of after hours entertainment we went to a theatre and saw Peter Pan in French.

The following morning after saying Mass quite early in Sacred Heart Church, we set out for a full day's travelling. What a day it turned out to be! The train up to Annecy was fairly comfortable and not too crowded. We enjoyed that part of the trip. And during our three hours wait at Annecy we had time not only for dinner, but for a walk to the park which borders the lake, Lac d'Annecy. There we saw another beautiful sight. The lake is bordered on the opposite side by towering majestic mountains which at the time were capped in white! I think it must be similar to Lake Louise in British Columbia, though I have not been to the latter and have seen it only in pictures. I had run out of film by then so have no snaps of it; Father Dick Donovan took a few with his camera in colour, however, which should be very good if they come out. They will only be slides, though.

At 1:45 p.m. we climbed on the train for Paris, and we literally climbed on, for it was packed to the doors. As I look back on it now we might have been better off had we climbed up on top of it and rode back to Paris, though the luggage might have presented a bit of a problem at some of the many tunnels we encountered on the way. After no little effort the two of us got standing room in the end of the coach, beside the little washroom. In that small space there were exactly 12 of us with our luggage which for some consisted of a duffle bag and a pair of skis. The whole situation was so outrageous we took it rather lightly at first and managed to laugh a bit. Surely they were going to put on more coaches, we said hopefully, and then, surely some people would be getting off at the different stations. But surely they didn't put on any more coaches, and for every one or two that managed to work their way out to get off at particular stations there were three or four squeezed on, and with luggage galore. Propped against the wall with my valise on top of someone else's, I was jogging along this way and that when the awful thought struck me that I hadn't a word of office said. Earlier in the day I had not bothered to say any knowing I would have oodles of time to say it while rolling back to Paris that afternoon. Tiem I had indeed, but the circumstances weren't exactly what I had envisaged. However I got the breviary out and said it from start to finish standing part of the time on my own feet and the rest of the time either on someone else's or they on mine. The afternoon

January 20, 1954

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drew on, the sun withdrew from the sky, night overtook us and still we rolled on. The initial humour of the situation had long since given way respectively to feelings of annoyance, sheer anger, prolonged resignation, numbness, and finally growing fatigue. About 9:30 the lights of Paris started passing by the steamed up windows, and at two minutes to ten we tumbled out onto the platform! In our abnormal state of mind we found a restaurant, ate supper, managed somehow to take the right subway home and fell into bed. "Well did you have a nice holiday?" they asked us the next morning, to which we replied, "Wonderful, wonderful!" adding on the side, "exception made for the trip back."

Closes with hope that all this has not bored you too much and greetings.

* * *

January 27, 1954.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

1. Apologizes for delay of a day in sending letter.
2. Weather in Canad and in Paris.

Yesterday I was amused at seeing a whole bunch of school kids in one of the parks sliding back and forward at a great rate on a small strip of ice they had found on one of the paths. It was a great novelty for them and you can be assured the French expressions of joy and delight were flying fast, too fast for me to pick up very much. I find the speaking of French is coming a bit more

January 27, 1954

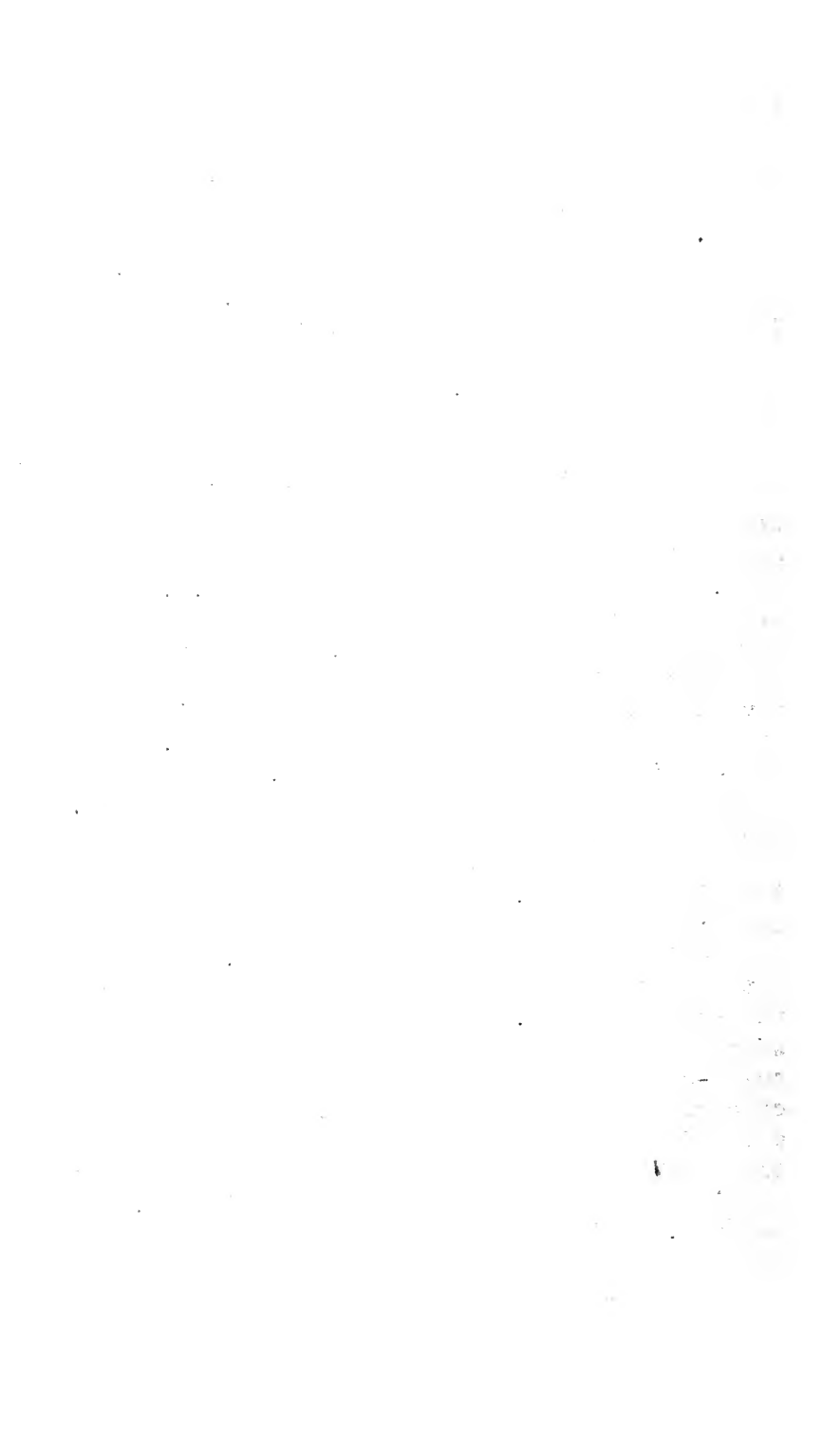
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easily and the understanding of it too. It is a slow process, but any progress is encouraging. Kids have such an advantage over adults when it comes to learning a language. They pick it up in no time, it seems. Wish I could learn their technique, which probably consists in turning back the years, and that is not so easily done.

Expresses thanks for a letter received.

Paragraph about a missing parcel.

Last Sunday after an early Mass here in the church I biked over to the Cathedral, Notre Dame, for the Solemn High Mass at 10 a.m. to see how things are carried out there. It was very beautiful and impressive. They have a magnificent big pipe organ there that sends a volume of tones rolling through the high stone archings from one end to the other. The choristers too are quite good, though there were not many of them on hand for Sunday. Maybe the cold drafts that sweep over that immense stretch of floor keep them away during the winter months. It was really cold in there; I kept my scarf and overcoat on and wished I had a couple more over them. It was not hard to get a good seat for the attendance was not too large. Outside the sun was shining brightly and coming through those multi-coloured stained glass windows it created a most beautiful sight. I stayed after the Mass for quite some time admiring the works of those mediaeval artists and wishing you could be there to enjoy it too. However, I did not forget to pray for you all there. Best to everyone and thanks again for writing.



February 4, 1954

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36 rue Guilleminot
Paris 14e, France

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

1. Tells of a letter announcing the birth of a baby boy to Lou.

It continues to keep cold over here, although today it has moderated a little bit. For the feast of the Purification we had a Solemn High Mass here in the church, Notre Dame du Travail. As is the case with many Parisian churches, it is not heated, so it felt the effects of the cold spell to the full and relayed them on to us who assisted at the Mass. A curious result of the lack of heat amused us during the ceremony. At one point the celebrant blesses the new candles, and then sprinkles them with holy water. Monsieur le Curé, the celebrant, reached for the sprinkler to carry out the prescribed asperges but it was frozen solid in the little pail. After two or three energetic attempts he took the pail and all, held it over one of the burning high candles (they stand at the end of the altar here and on the floor) and finally poured the few drops of holy water on the new candles that had melted from the heat of the flame. It was not exactly a liturgical gesture, but about the only thing he could do at the time. A smile of amusement went from one to the other in the sanctuary, and the little altar boys in particular seemed to enjoy it, all except the one who presented the aspersory. To give you a further idea of how chilly it was in the church, I was wearing

the following articles of clothing: woollen underwear, three sweaters, cassock, one cardigan sweater, scarf and two overcoats, all this under my surplice, and oh yes, my overshoes! You wouldn't have recognized the young enormous prelate. M. le Curé got quite a kick out of such a get-up, and told me I looked like what his idea was of a northern Canadian trapper. Anyway I wasn't cold, though not a bit too warm, either. That's a record for me for clothes at once; I didn't think I'd be setting it, though, in Paris.

The question of the worker-priests is a big issue at the present moment. As you probably know the French bishops got together and drew up a program for them which greatly curtailed their activities in the factories, one of the restrictions being that they work no longer than three hours a day with ordinary workers. This proposal was not very well accepted by them; and a letter of protest was printed in the leading newspapers yesterday signed by 73 worker-priests throughout France. (They are about 120 in all). It reads like a declaration that they will go on working as they have been all along, despite the bishops. It's an unfortunate problem and not an easy one to handle for the difficulties are numerous. You might include it in your prayers that it will work out alright and not be too great a scandal to the church in France. As one of priests here said, They have need of our prayers more than our criticism.

Inquired about missing parcels at postoffice.

I see tomorrow is Grandma Fleury's anniversary, so I will give her special mention at Mass.

February 4, 1954

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By the time this letter reaches you, Mom, the 12th will be drawing nigh, so in advance let me wish you happy birthday. You may be sure that you will be in my prayers that day more than usual, as gift will give you My Mass that morning.

Have to dash to a lecture now.

* * *

February 5, 1954.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink, Pete, and Mary,
Just a note to tell you the two boxes arrived this morning ...

* * *

Wed. Feb. 10, 1954.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

Here goes a few words of greeting this afternoon before I go buzzing off on my bike to two lectures from 3-5 p.m. ... Severe winter in Paris this year.

Thanks for letter received on Monday.

Thanks for parcels received.

I was amused at Margaret's defence of Paris and at the same time grateful for the compliment. It's true that there are parts of Paris which are pretty hard to defend, but it has its beautiful sections too. How I would love to take you all for a tour through its good and bad parts to let you see it for

February 10, 1954

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yourselves. Maybe you will surprise me one of these days with a letter telling me you are sailing on such and such a boat and will be in Paris on such and such a date. If such is the case let me assure you that I will not wait for you in Paris, but rather on the very end of the pier where the boat docks.

Well there is just about enough time for me to make it to the Sorbonne on my Mistral (the bike). Thank you again for provisioning so well our afternoon lunches - "le casse-croûte" as they call it.

* * *

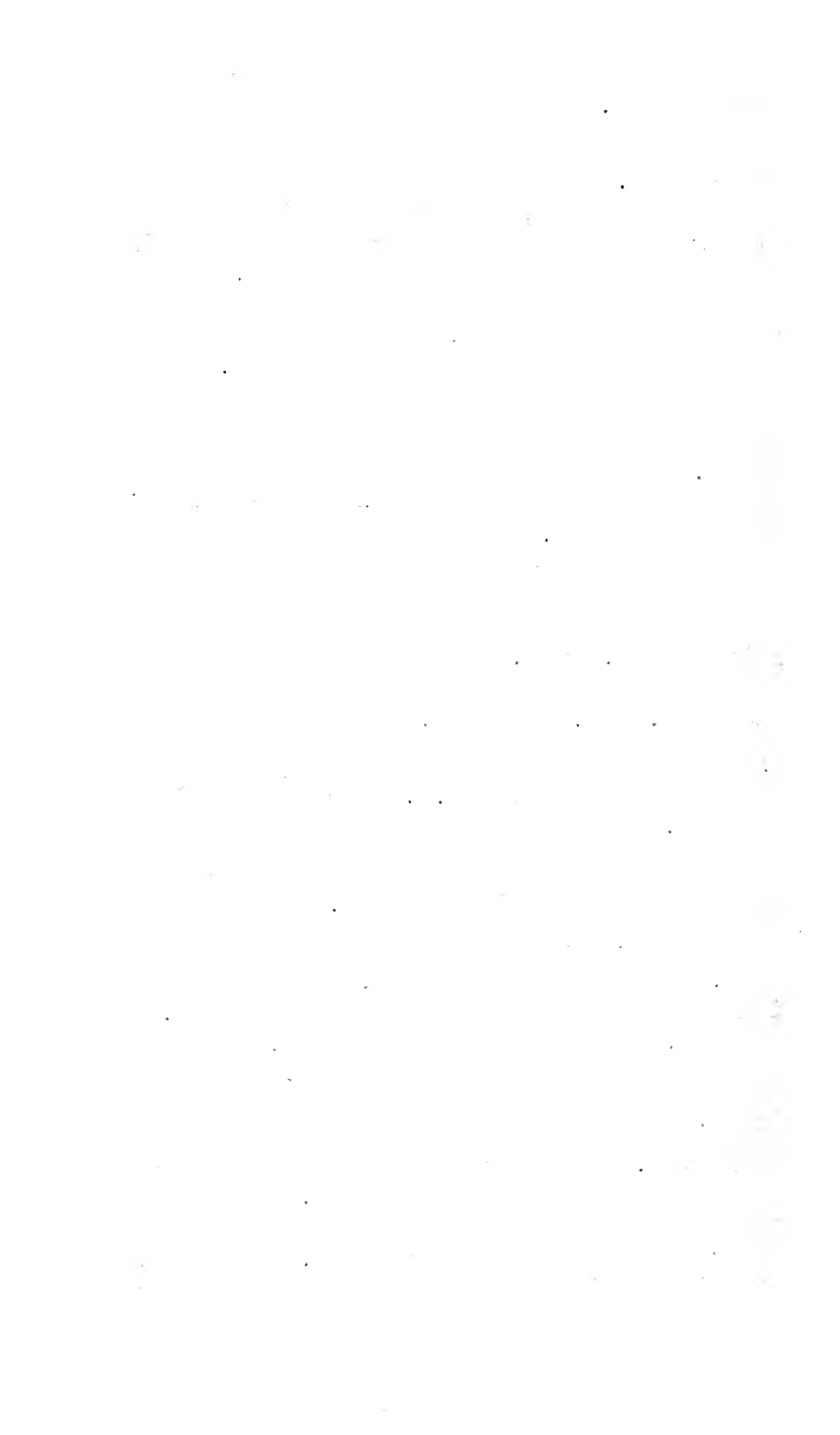
February 18, 1954.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

Greetings on this chilly afternoon just prior to a lecture at 4:30 p.m. Describes Paris weather.

Thanks for letters and for the provisions in the boxes previously received.

We have a confrere with us here at the present time, Father Ambrose Raftis. He has just finished his thesis at Cambridge University, England, for his second doctorate, the first being from Laval three years ago. You may remember my mentioning him before for he was studying in Quebec the year I was at the Grand Séminaire. He did his first thesis in the modern period in Social Science. Then he was assigned to Cambridge to work on the history of Economics in the Middle Ages, an entirely new field which required his starting in from



February 18, 1954

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scratch. So now after three years of study and research he has come out with a 450 page thesis for his second Ph.D. which is really something for that degree is only accorded once in a blue moon in Economical History. He is on his way down to Lourdes now before going back to Canada. He will be teaching in the Mediaeval Institute at St. Michael's.

Well, the Church in France has received another blow in the suppression of three Dominican Provincials and the removal of others from their teaching position. It has caused quite a lot of heated discussion among the clerical circles, and even among the secular newspapers. It seems they were supporting a social doctrine that Rome considered a bit too advanced. This knock coming close on the heels of the priest-worker issue has not exactly increased French loyalty to Rome. There is no love lost between French and Italians, or between any of these nations over here for that matter. I never really knew what national prejudice and bitterness was till I came here. It is very interesting and enlightening to watch as a spectator, but thanks be I'm not a European.

Closing greetings.

* * *

Ash Wednesday - Mercredi des Cendres, 1954

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

I guess it would not be altogether out of place to start today by wishing you a happy Lent to the extent to which that is possible.

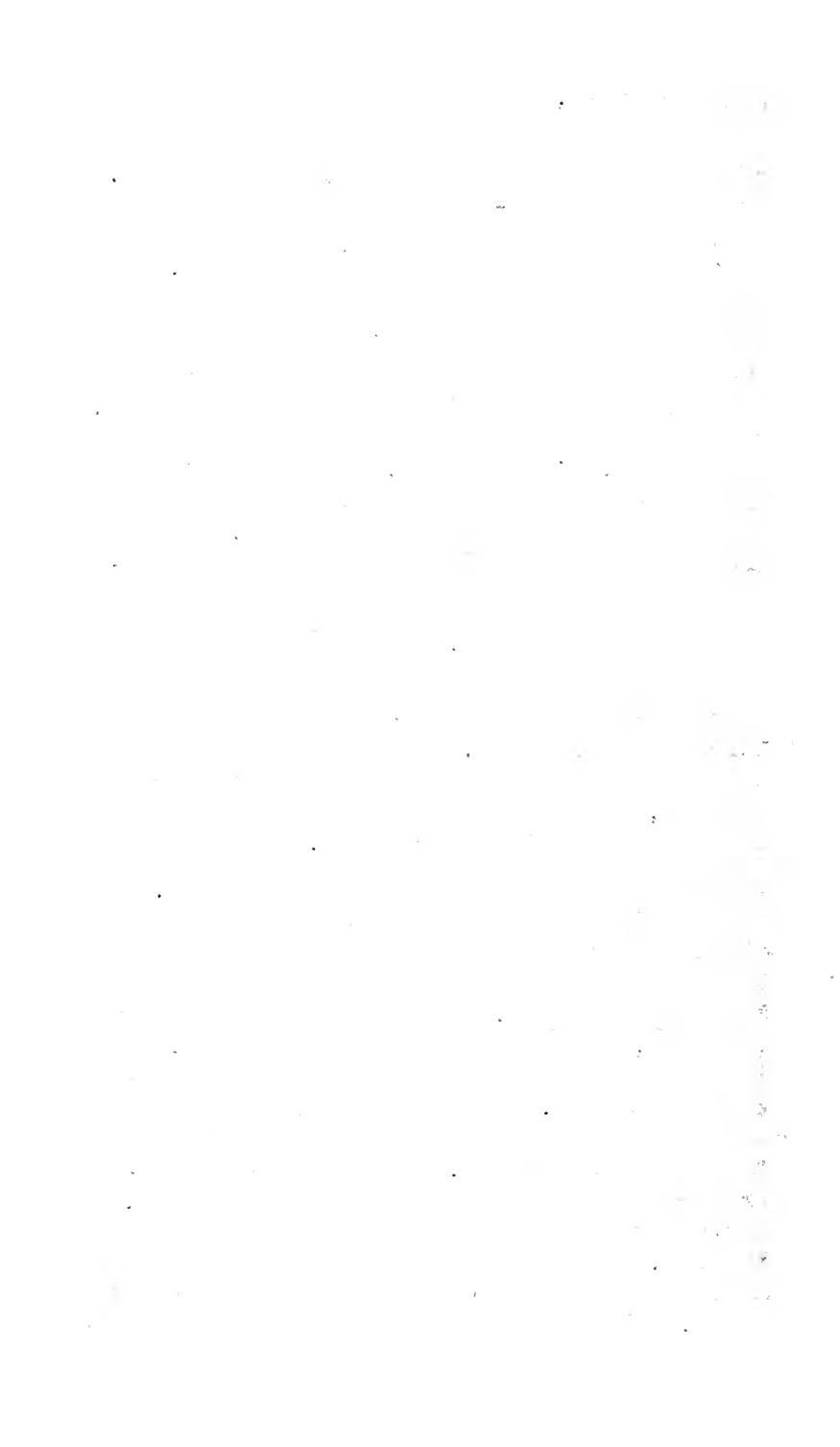
Lent is a bit late in coming this year, but just the same it always sort of creeps up on you sooner than you expect; and once here it moves in for six weeks and doesn't budge an inch till Holy Saturday. The regulations over here are not very rigid, in fact not much different from ordinary times. Fasting is almost non-existent. It disappeared with the War, and hasn't come back since, with the exception of a few days in the year. But that is understandable, I think, for food is still a problem with a lot of people. It takes a long time to get over the effects of a war.

Monday and Tuesday were holidays at the University - lundi et mardi gras, and came as somewhat of a relief in this long term from Christmas to Easter. It fell particularly well for me since I normally have most of my lectures on those two days, nine in fact. Father Dick Donovan and I did a little bit of visiting around. On Monday we took a bus out to a famous old castle in the suburbs, about 20 kilometres from Paris, Saint-Germain en Leye. It was the residence of French Kings for centuries before Versailles was built. Most of the castle is a museum now exhibiting Gallic-Roman statues, weapons, etc., but it is still plain to see from the immense rooms and stairways what a magnificent building it was. The grounds at the back of it are something to see too; there must be about 500 acres of forest and about the same of park with a grand terrace running the whole length of it on one side from where you get a view

of several miles in the direction of Paris. To see such a lay-out of property gives you an idea of the power and influence of the monarchy here in France in former days, and suggests a reason for the destructive fury of the Revolution in 1789.

Tuesday (yesterday) was not a very nice day so we confined our sight-seeing to the city. In the company of one of the curates here at the parish, l'abbé Comby, we made a thorough inspection of the church St.-Etienne du Mont where Pascal and Racine are buried, and then the ruins of an early outdoor stadium something of the kind we saw at Arles and Nîmes during the Christmas holidays. It being the original parish of l'abbé Comby he proved to be a very capable guide and was able to keep us circulating in local French history for three or four hours. We got home late in the afternoon played out from standing and walking, but happy to have explored that much farther into Gallican culture.

Yesterday morning was well taken up too. One of the big public theatres gave a preview to all the clergy of the city of the picture that they are beginning to run for the public today Le Défroqué. The title is a bit astounding, but no moreso than the movie. It is a very powerful story with some breathtaking moments. The French have a way of going to unbelievable lengths when it comes to sin and sacrilege. The part of the defrocked priest is taken by Pierre Fresnay, perhaps the greatest actor in French films of the day. He is a wonderful actor and without a doubt is the main reason for the picture's merit. Though there is nothing at all irrev-



March 10, 1954

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ent in it, in fact the scenes of the Mass and the like are very well done, nevertheless, there are some extremes in it, and perhaps an overplay of sentiment at times. In general, however, it is very well done, and well worth seeing, I think. I don't know under what title it will be shown in America, but you will recognize it by the name Fresnay who plays the leading rôle.

It was good news to hear of Aust and Jean's new boy. The feminine strain seems to be taking a beating. Must drop them a line, to-day if possible. Best to all, and don't over fast.

* * *

36 rue Guilleminot, Paris 14
March 10, 1954

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

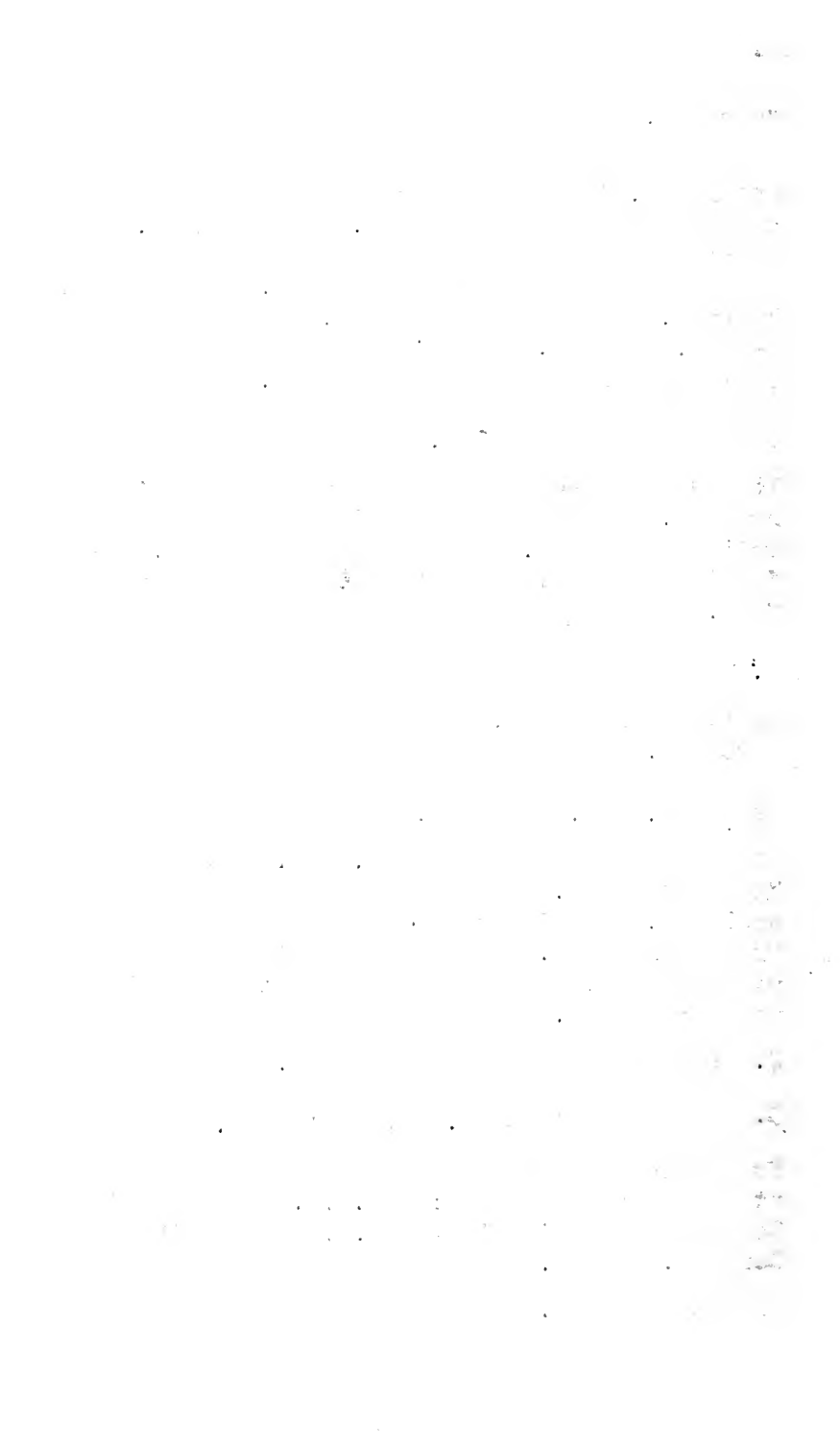
Thanks for your good letter, Mom, which arrived Monday morning, and also for the Mass intention enclosed. I said the Mass this morning for Frank Callaghan. It was a surprise to hear of his death, and he will be missed by Paul and his mother.

2. Comments on weather in Canada.

3. Observations on St. Patrick's Day.

Father Terence McLaughlin has probably docked at Cherbourg by now (1:30 p.m.). We are going to meet his train at 4:30 p.m. here at the Gare St. Lazare.

Closing remarks.



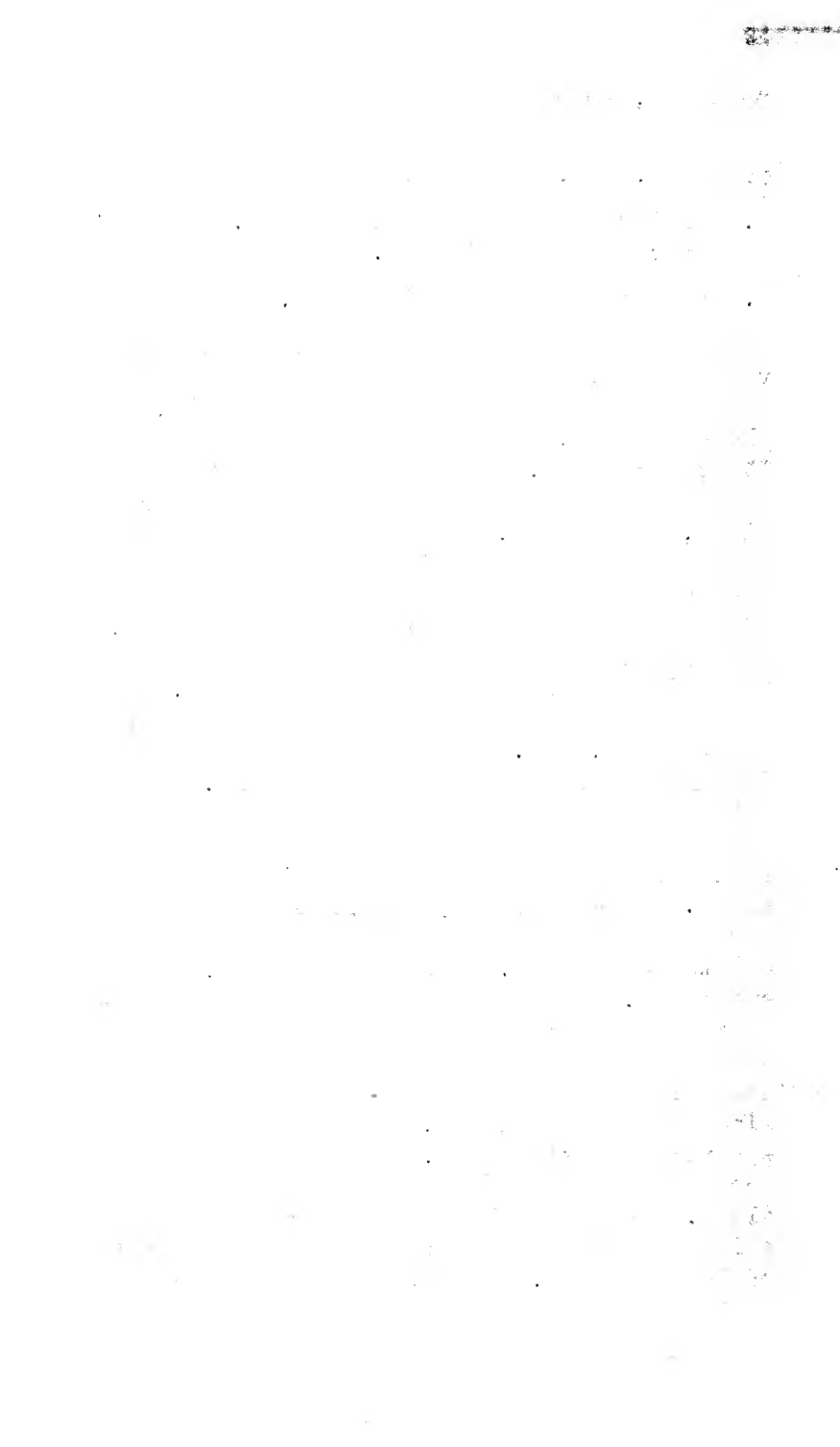
March 24, 1954

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Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

1. Received letter with news of St. Patrick's Day concert in Lindsay.
2. Comments on weather in Paris.

On Sunday afternoon we went out for our weekly visit about. This time it was the oldest church in Paris, Saint-Germain-des-Près, completed in 558. It was first built to house the cloak of St. Vincent which was brought back from Spain by one of the early French Kings, Childebert, after one of his expeditions. But after the Benedictines came to Paris in the 8th century it became the abbey church for a huge monastery constructed around it. This territory was exempt from all diocesan authority and subject directly to Rome. It suffered more than one devastating attack by Normands, etc., so that what one sees today dates only from the 12th century. The only remnants of the original are a few marble pillars that can be seen between the windows that encircle the sanctuary behind the main altar. An example of what independence this church commanded is furnished on the occasion of its dedication. The Pope himself, Alexander III, came up from Rome for the consecration in 1163; the abbot of the monastery was scheduled to offer the Mass in the presence of the Holy Father who was already in his place in the sanctuary. The Bishop of Paris was also in attendance. When it came time for the Mass to start no one appeared at the altar. The delay became more and more remarkable but still no abbot was seen coming out of the sacristy. Finally a messenger was



March 24, 1954

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sent over to the Bishop of Paris to say that the Mass would not begin until he left the church. The abbot wanted to make it clear both to the diocesan clergy and the Pope that he and his monks were subject directly to Rome and no one else. So the Bishop had no choice but to pick up his train and leave the church.

Saint-Germain also has a particular interest for Canadians since it was in its sanctuary that Bishop Laval was consecrated, the first bishop of Canada. There is a plaque commemorating this event on the wall of the choir near the main altar.

That section of the city is extremely congested and rickety. But thanks to our bikes (I really don't think we ever could have done it in a car) we were able to follow the narrow sinister streets to other points of interest in that district, one of them being the house where Dr. Guillotin invented the famous machine called after him, and first tried it out on sheep. I wonder if he had any idea how many heads would fall from it in the ensuing centuries.

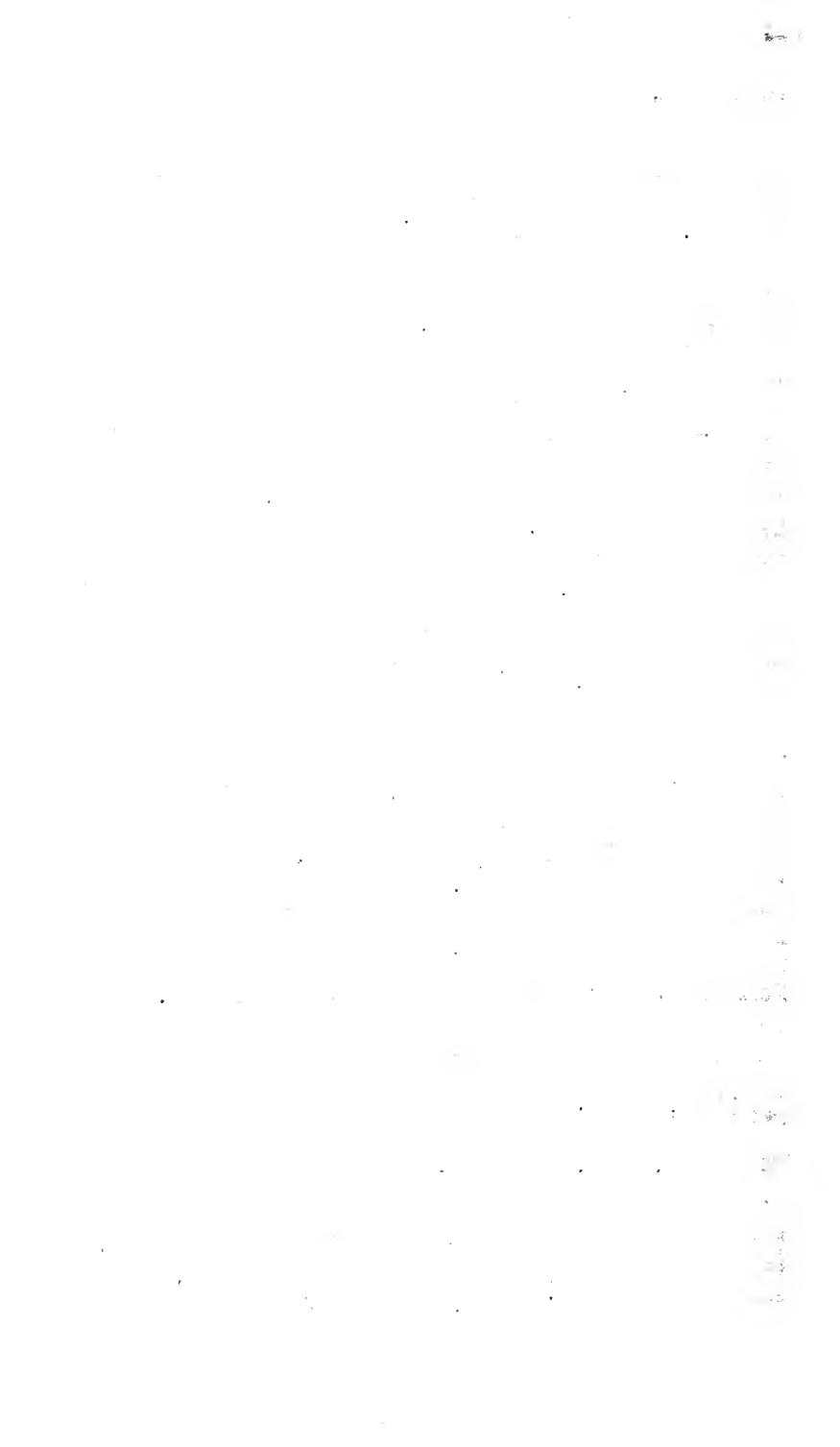
Remarks on studies and closing greetings.

* * *

April 7, 1954.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

Since we strike out early tomorrow morning I thought I better get a word off to you today. The next one will probably be from Rome, but just when I can't say. Our route down is



April 7, 1954

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pretty well crowded so it's not likely I'll be sending you any letter until arrival down there, with the possible exception of a post-card or two, (or three).

Our train leaves Paris tomorrow morning at 7:45 .am. from Gare de l'Est, which is about an hour's ride on the subway from the house here. So to get Mass and breakfast in we'll have to be scuttling around early as it were. We should be in Bâle, Switzerland, by 1:15 p.m. where we change trains and arrive at Lucerne around 5:00 o'clock. We are staying there over night, and in the morning are taking the boat down the lake to Fluelen. It is supposed to be a very beautiful trip if the weather is fine. From there we catch a train around 4:00 p.m. which takes us into Italy by Chiasso and arrives in Milan about 9:00 p.m. After stopping there over night we go on to Venice which we should reach by 4:30 p.m. Saturday afternoon. We are going to stay there overnight and also for Palm Sunday, at least until about 2:00 p.m. when we take the train for Florence, arriving we hope at 7:00 o'clock in the evening. All of Monday and Tuesday we plan to stay in Florence; early Wednesday morning then we go on to Assisi, hometown of your patron, Dad. We will have about six hours between trains there which should give us some time to visit the shrine of the Saint. The same day we continue on our way and finish up the trip by arriving in Rome, Wednesday night about 9:00 p.m.

Some of the names of these stop-overs may be foreign to you, as they are to me yet. So you might be able to follow the route, Mom,

April 7, 1954

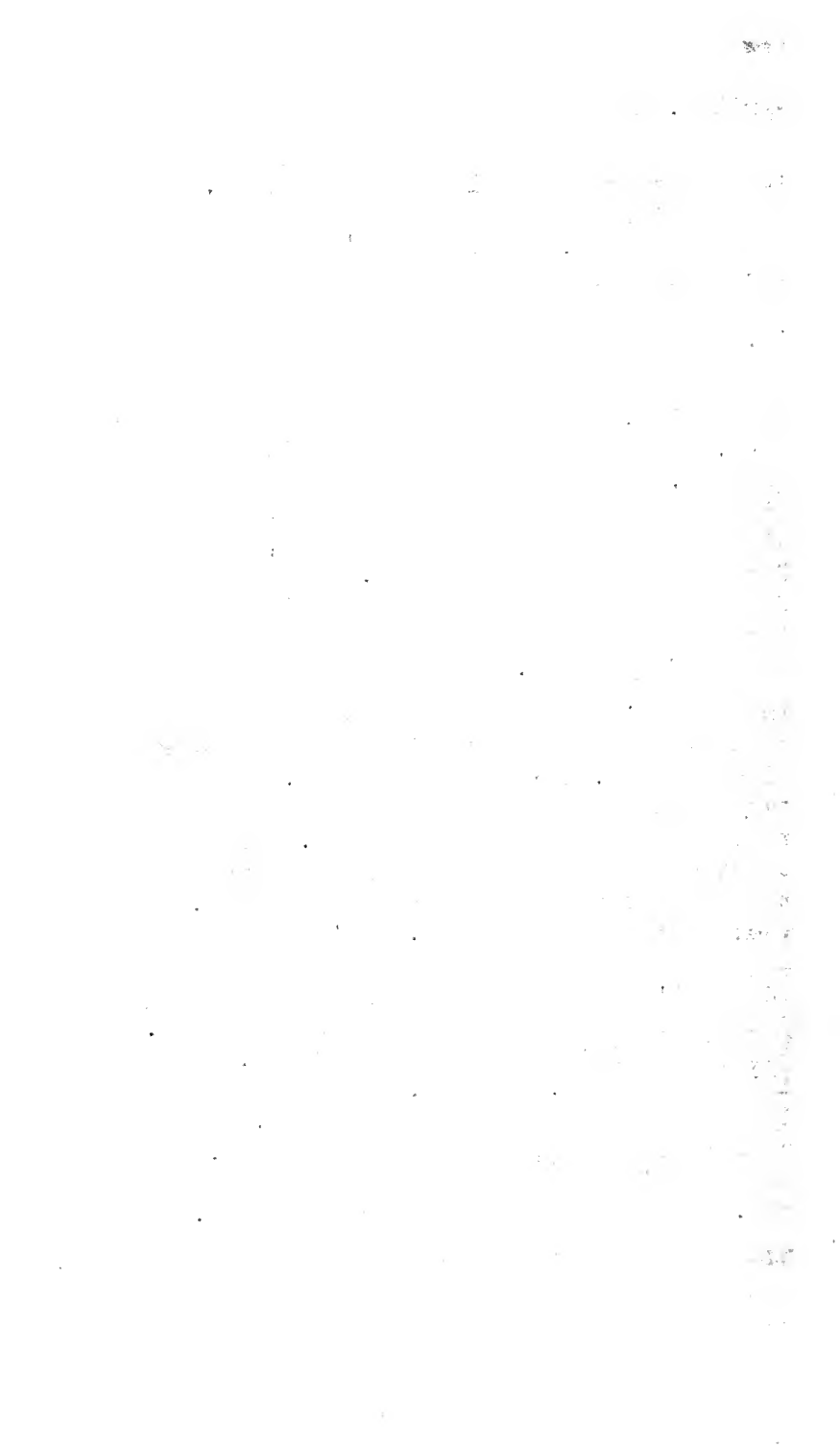
59

if you get out the old Geography book, Don't be surprised if they are spelled differently here and there. There doesn't seem to be much uniformity on that particular point over here since it depends on the country you are in.

In Rome we are going to meet Fathers Terence McLaughlin, Eugene Malley and Terence Forestell, all Basilians who are stationed there already. They have arranged that we stay with them at the Canadian College. There are also other Canadian priests there, both French and English speaking. We hope to stay for seven or eight days after which we take the train back for Paris and arrive the night of April 25.

In a way I'm a little hesita~~nt~~ to take off so much time from my work at this particular time of year, prior to the exams. As you can imagine there will be very little book work on such a vacation as that. But then there will be other things learned undoubtedly that just cannot be found in the books. That fact sort of consoles me. It's a funny feeling but ever since I was knee-high to a grasshopper I've been troubled with the ominous spectre of exams looming up on the horizon. Every year it's been the same thing, with this difference, however, that the exams seem to get tougher as the time goes on. They are a horrible thing, through and through, and must surely be a direct result of original sin. There seems to be no end to them.

Closing observations deal with weather in Paris.



April 16, 1954

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Good Friday.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink.

Easter greetings from Rome!

Brief account of trip and arrival in Rome.

My first impressions of Rome are rather ^{en-}vious, and probably not very accurate, but I'll give you some of them anyway. It seems to be much more modern than I had imagined. The big central station, for example, is like something you might expect to see in the year 2000. Many of the streets are wide and swarming with the latest cars, buses and scooters (although the ancient and narrow sections are not inexistent). The churches, of which there is one or two about a city block are not particularly conducive to prayer. They have no pews, at best only a few chairs in one corner; the people come and go, talk and chat as though they were in just another public building. There is a certain familiarity with the Church here that we scarcely know in our country, and which has been the tradition here from the earliest times.

Yesterday, Holy Thursday, we visited 12 or 13 churches and prayed at the various repositories. The first one we went to was, of course, St. Peter's. It is so magnificent I do not know how to write about it. Strangely enough when I saw it in reality it appeared much smaller than previous photographs had led me to imagine. But as we crossed the expansive square and came closer it took on larger dimensions. Once inside again it seemed to lose its hugeness, but as we started walking by the gigantic pillars from one

April 18, 1954

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section to another down the long nave and looked up from beneath the tremendous dome I began to realize that it really is colossal.

* * *

April 18, 1954.

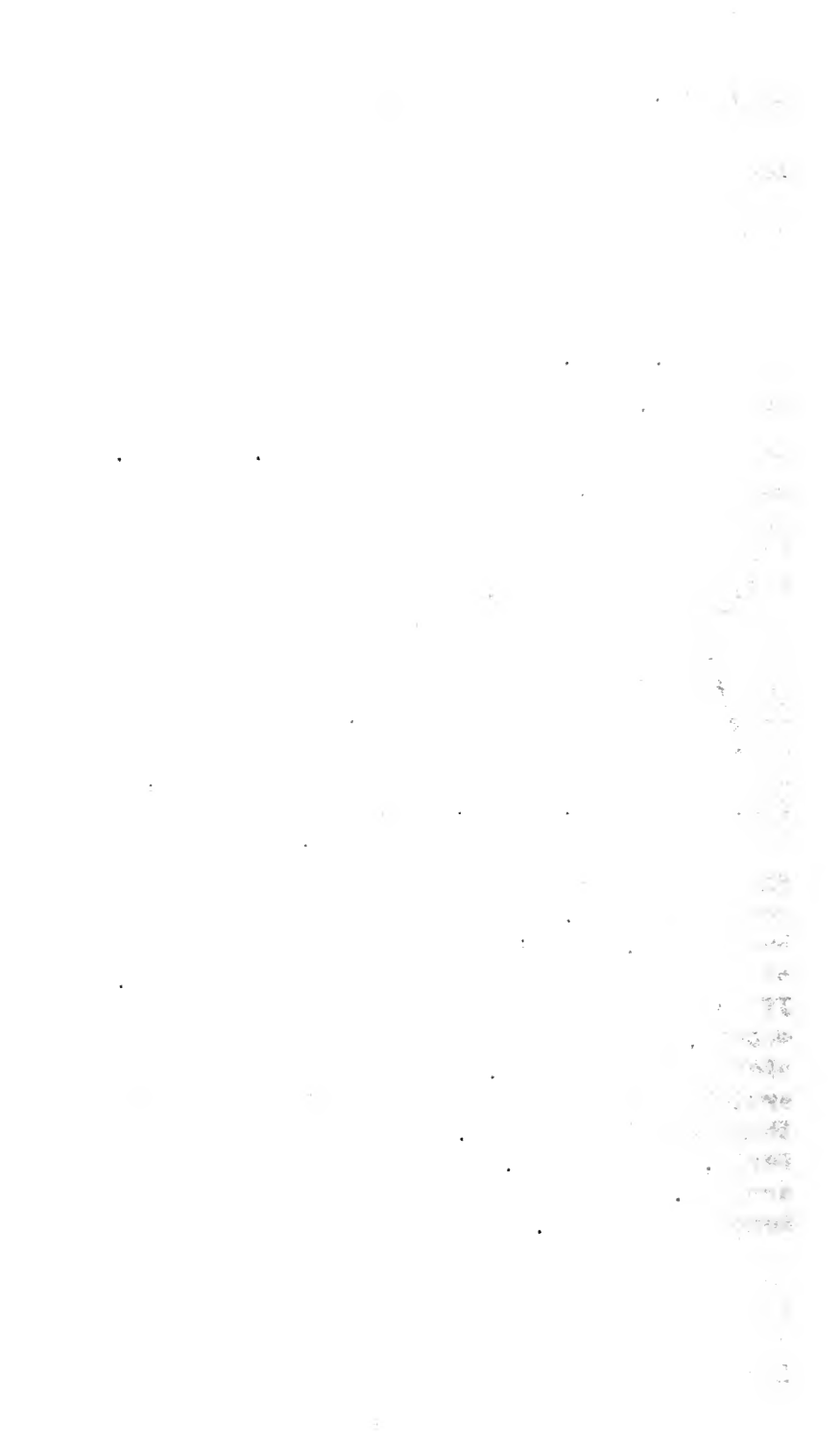
Bear Kink,

Expresses thanks for letter and \$5.00 in it.

Holy Saturday: This morning we paid a four hour visit to the ruins of the ancient Roman Forum and the Palatine where the Emperors built their palaces. Our guide was excellent, an old but lively French Sulpician priest who has lived for over forty years in Rome and who has conducted such a tour many times each year. It was extremely interestinf. We seemed to go back to the Christian and pre-christian era as he pointed out the various temples, circus grounds, baths, etc. and put them in their proper historical setting.

Easter Sunday: This morning I said Mass for Mother and Dad. In about an hour we are going over to St. Peter's square to get a glimpse of the Holy Father and receive his blessing. If you happen to listen in you will hear our shouts, though I doubt if you will be able to pick out our voices. I bought some religious articles for yesterday which will be blessed there by His Holiness. I will start back for Paris, Friday 23rd. Will write you upon arrival. My prayers for you all upon this memorable Easter.

* * *



April 29, 1954

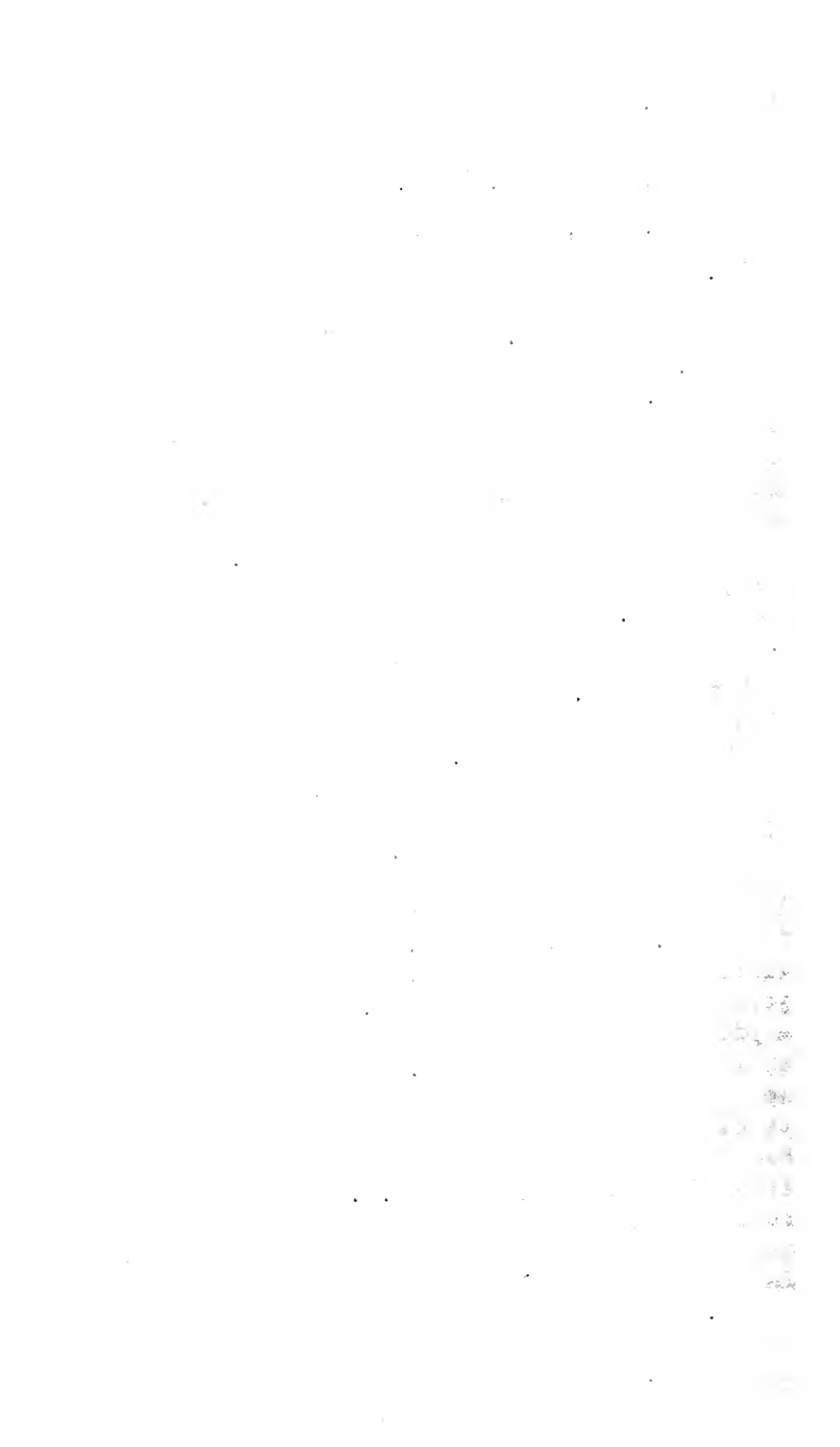
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Thursday, April 29, 1954.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

Well, here we are back again in Paris after the most delightful Easter holidays I think I have ever spent. I shouldn't say "we" really, because Father Dick Donovan is not back yet. ^{He} had a professor in Rome to see about thesis work who did not return until the day I was leaving; it seems the professor was off somewhere in Spain for Easter, so that Dick had to wait till he got back before being able to get an interview. The result was that I voyaged up from the Eternal City alone.

The trip back was very lovely from a scenic point of view, though a bit lonely after the fine company that entertained us at the Canadian College in Rome. I left Friday morning and arrived at Pisa about noon. After a three or four hour visit there I went on to Genoa where I stayed over night. The next morning again I took the train that goes into Switzerland and by making a change somewhere along the line, Spiez, I think, arrived at the beautiful town of Interlaken. I will be telling you more about it later one, but truly it is a picturesque spot and a visit there should extend over several days. Unfortunately for me only one day remained in which to get back to classes for Monday at the Sorbonne so I had to board the train again in the morning following at about 10:00 a.m. It got us to Bern shortly after noon where I had my dinner, and took the afternoon train out of Switzerland at Les Varrières to Dijon and then on to Paris. It was shortly after 10:00 p.m. when our electric locomotive pulled into Gare de Lyon here. I think it must have started to



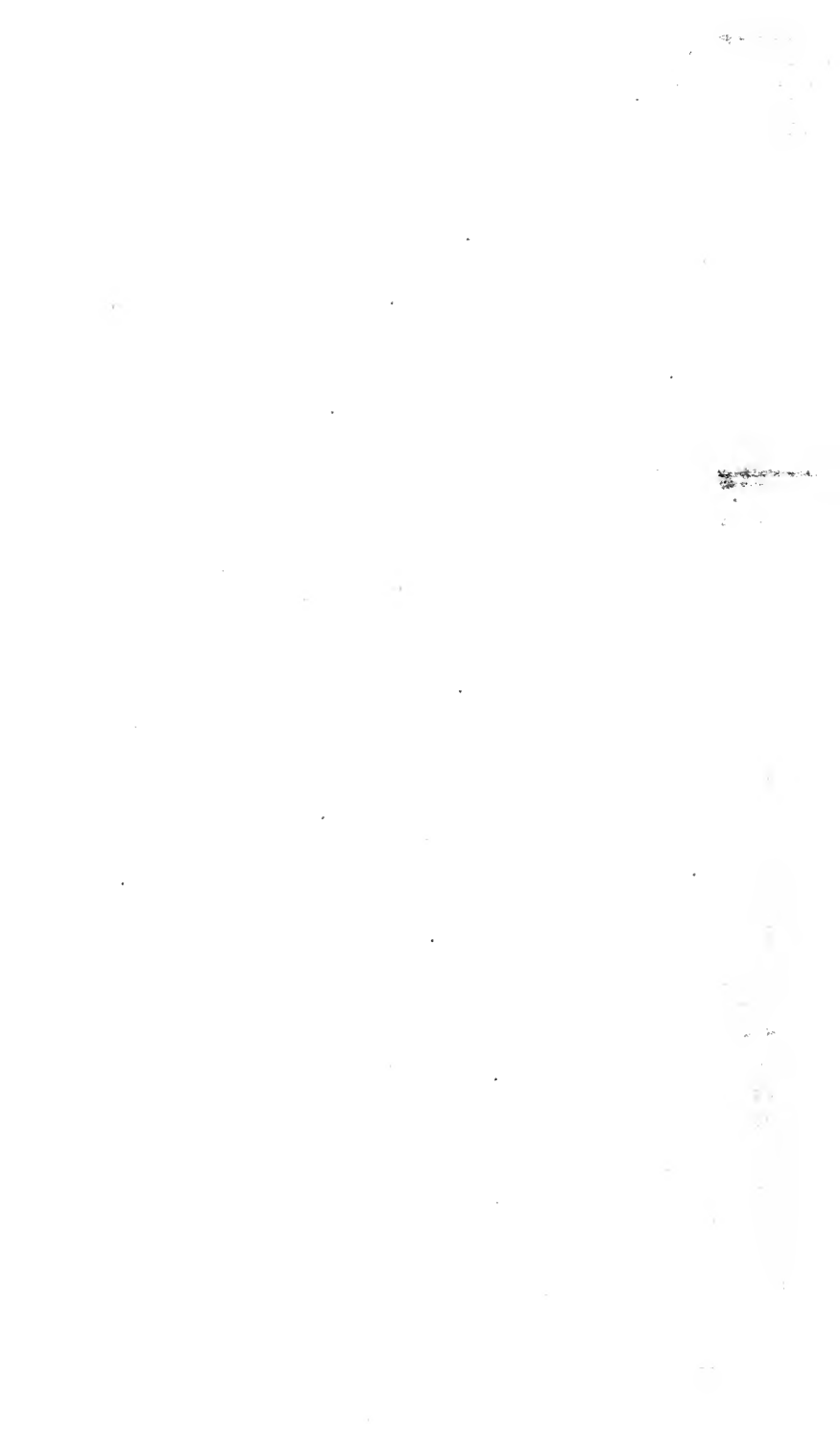
April 29, 1954

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slow down about ten miles before coming to the station for it fairly flew over the rails from Dijon to ^Paris. I believe that line has a record for being the fastest in the world; and I can understand why. It really rolls.

The visit in Rome was enjoyable from start to finish. The ten days were pretty well filled for we did a lot of visiting. There are a lot of most interesting things to see, so many in fact, that I hardly noticed the time go by. The climax came on Easter Sunday morning when we stood in the vast square of St. Peter's and after about an hour's wait saw the Holy Father come out on the balcony. Though I had seen many pictures of him I still experienced an undescribable and unforgettable thrill on seeing him in person. Having arrived in good time we were able to move up fairly close, but even so when he finally came out into view he looked pretty small; such is the immensity of the great basilica. Between shouting and waving I managed to take a couple of snaps, but they may not come out very well, for I rather think my emotional condition shook the camera a bit.

Easter Saturday I bought a few religious articles which I brought to the square the next morning, and which are consequently blessed by the Holy Father. I will try and get them off to you before too long. I will also send along some medals I bought at Lourdes and at Fatima last Fall that I have been intending to send ever since. Father Eugene Malley who is stationed at Rome is having a papal blessing made up for you which he said he would send from there, along with a picture of the



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Pope and the crowd taken Easter Sunday morning. So you will know what it is when it arrives.

Closing remarks about exams and letters.

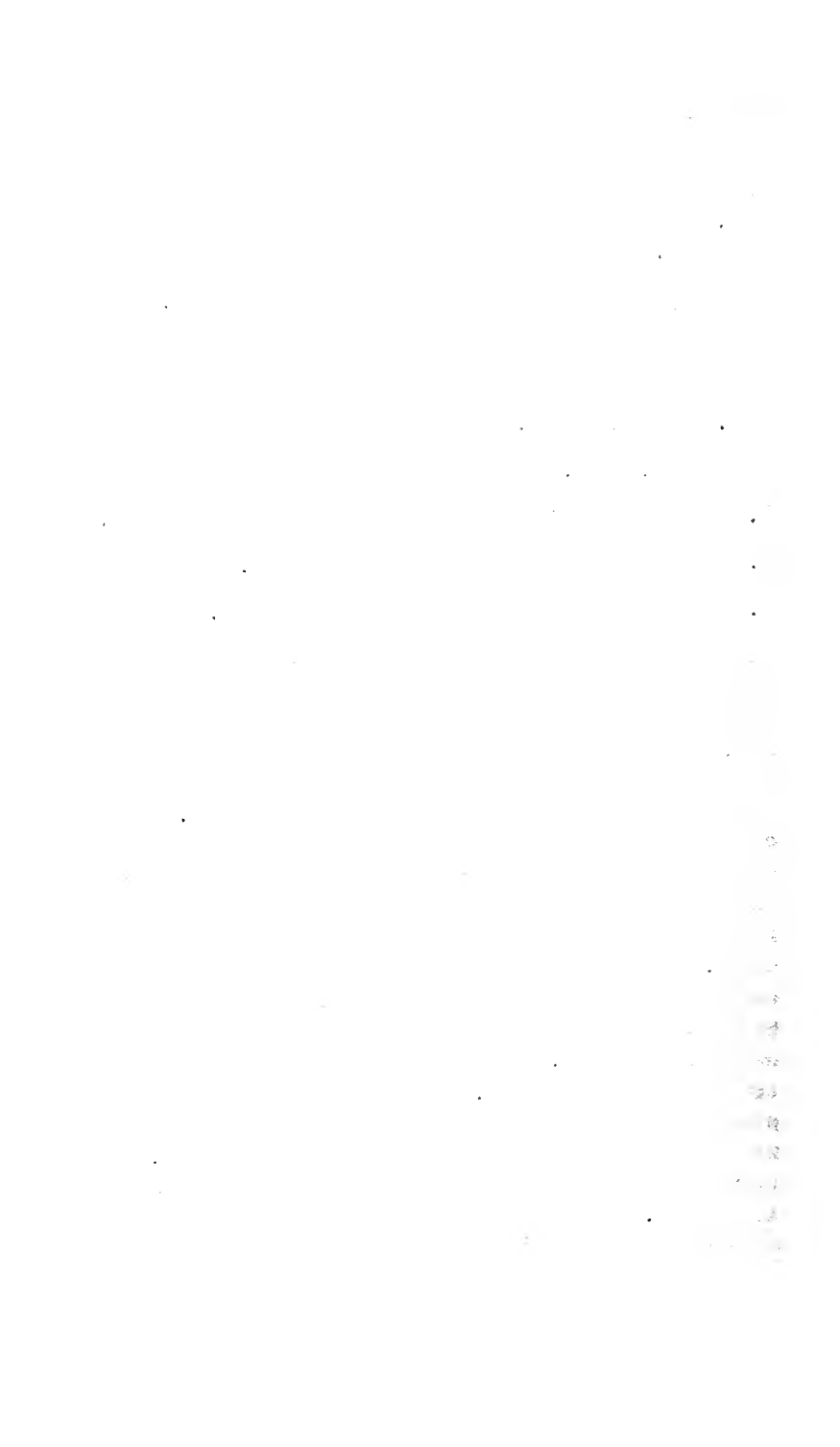
* * *

Wed. May 5, 1954.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

1. Observations about the weather in Canada.
2. Asks about a banquet in Lindsay.
3. Will begin account of Easter trip.

It was a delightful treat and rest for our eyes after weeks of plugging away at dusty books and manuscripts to see the green pasture fields and flowering fruit trees going by the window of the train as we rolled eastward out of Paris on the morning of April 8. We could do little else than just relax and inwardly rejoice that every minute was changing a lovely countryside and bringing us further away from the dust and smoke of the city. We had our dinner on the train that day and a good one it was too: (we discovered why it was so good when the waiter came along with the bill). Shortly afterwards we came to the Swiss border. There the business of customs held us up for some time; not that we had anything to declare in particular, but because there was quite a crowd going through that day. When we got rolling again it was a Swiss countryside that we saw from our



window, and despite the fact that rural France had looked awfully good to us, it was evident at once that we had passed into a neater and more charming country. Just to anticipate for a moment I feel obliged here to mention that both the trip down through Switzerland and the trip back will ever remain in my mind as most pleasant. Both the people and their country have left a very good impression with me.

We stayed in Lucerne that night and took the little steamer the next morning for the trip down the lake. Unfortunately the day was not clear so that we saw very little of the real beauty that that trip affords when the sun is shining. On both sides the mountains tower up to meet the sky. Their crests were lost to us in the low-lying clouds so we had to sort of imagine what the scene would be like had we been luckier. From the end of the lake we boarded the train again that took us down into Milan. Again there was a border delay while the Italian police checked luggage and stamped passports. Somehow or other Father Donovan and I missed out on supper that night, so before going to bed we got some hot chocolate in a nearby bar. We had quite a time making the bar-tender understand what we wanted. I thought I would have to climb over and point out the ingredients to be used, but after a few words in Latin and few in Spanish he finally guessed what we were after. Judging from what the others were drinking around us I suspect he was not in the habit of preparing an order so mild as ours.

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We stayed in a students' residence at Milan, where we met some very fine lads who were studying law, engineering and medicine respectively. They proved very helpful to us as sympathetic interpreters during our stay there. The following morning we had just enough time before the train to go and visit the wonderful cathedral. What a marvel it is! Pages and pages could be devoted to it alone, for it is truly one of the great witnesses of the faith of another age. We took an elevator up to the top and walked around through a veritable forest of statues and gargoyles. The detail is amazing, even on little spires and figures hidden away where they can scarcely be seen. The whole building is constructed of white marble but from the dome the ensemble looks more like white linen and lace. We were loathe to leave, for hours could be spent exploring its artistic wealth but we had to be on our way if we were to get to Venice that day.

To Venice we got, though not without a scramble for seats on the train. In Italy it is impossible to rent or reserve just two single places. It seems you have to reserve a whole compartment before the officials will accept to go through the required formalities. The result is a mad dash for any vacant seats, sometimes even before the train comes to a stop while pulling into the station. We were lucky, though, to get two places in the same compartment. We were not quite so lucky with regard to dinner that day, however. Being a day train and leaving Milan around 11:00 a.m. it doesn't bother to include a diner car. It

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takes it for granted that everybody has eaten before getting on, which I imagine everybody had done, except one pair of avid sight-seers, who had to wait till arrival in Venice at 4:30 p.m. before partaking of dinner. You can imagine how we devoured spaghetti and more spaghetti once we found a restaurant, not forgetful of the fact that we had missed out on supper the night before. Here I might answer your question, Mom, re health throughout; we both felt fine during the entire vacation, and had no trouble whatever with the change of foods - partly due perhaps to our often being half starved by the time we sat down to a meal. It didn't happen very often that we fasted like that, though; we soon learned that one can buy fruits and the like from the vendors at the bigger stations. They push a cart along side the train shouting out what they have - fruits, wines, chocolate, etc. Whenever we got hungry while still on the train we patronised these fellows, buying luscious big oranges or apples for a few 'lire' (the Italian money).

Venice is the most unusual place I have ever seen. I had read about its canals for streets before, but until I actually experienced it, it never struck me as being very strange. Upon arrival at the station you just have to take a boat to get to the city. There is a wide choice depending on the price you want to pay. Naturally we took the cheapest, what is called a vaporetto. It is a fir-sized launch that stops at several different little docks all the way down the big canal that winds through the city. It is equivalent to

a bus or street-car in another city, with its ticket system, its stops, and the traffic signals that it must obey - red lights at the bigger intersections (intersections of canals, of course) and caution signals at sharp turns. Father Donovan and I stood on its deck absolutely enchanted as we made our way through the city. All along we saw the houses and public buildings rising straight up out of the water, the waves slapping the steps of the front doors. It is the strangest sight you've ever seen. Here and there you see private motor boats, canoes, tugs, etc., but by far the most numerous are the gondolas. Many families own their own, but most of these that you see are operated by guides who make their living by taking visitors around. The gondola is a long black boat (strangely enough they are all black) turned up like a Phoenician war ship at either end. They are about eighteen feet long, I would say, with places for but two passengers, sometimes four. The gondolier stands at the back, and operates his one long oar from there in a standing position.

As you can imagine they are pretty handy with their boats for it is their only means of transportation. If you look at a map of the city of Venice, you will notice it is divided into sections by the numerous canals that run in every direction. On each of these sections there are little streets of pavement for the pedestrians - no cars, bikes, or anything that rolls. There are many bridges of course over the little canals, though not many over the main canal. One of the big bridges is famous

there, that of the Rialto, which figures in Shakespeare's Merchant of Venice. These sections of the city are more or less natural divisions. In the early days the site of the present city was a stretch of sandy islands and lagoons. The natives in the area were driven onto these deposits of sand at the time of the Barbarian Invasions of the Holy Roman Empire. They settled there, and eventually dug the lagoos deeper so that they would be navigable for communication from one sand dune to another. This gave rise to the city with its canals instead of streets. In one of the snaps that I will send you there is visible out in the bay a collection of sand just about the level of the water, which must be somewhat like these primitive little islands. But when you float around through the city you forget about its origins and only marvel at how fantastic it is that a city should be built in the water like that.

We said Mass in the Cathedral, St. Mark's, and came back later on in the morning for the blessing and procession of the palms. They do not carry palms, however, but olive branches. In the afternoon we visited the Palace of the Doge, which is very rich in art treasures. We crossed the famous Bridge of Sighs, the bridge that leads from the court rooms to the prison, across which the prisoners used to walk to their death uttering lamentable sighs as they went. Before we knew it, it was time for our train. We had to take a faster boat back to the station than the vaporetto, namely a motoscaffa, and it just barely got

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us there on time. We swung our luggage and ourselves onto the last coach and started that very moment to roll back westwards towards Florence.

Both going to Venice and coming back to Florence we had to pass through the Appennines. They are not too impressive after the Alps, but are good-sized mounds nonetheless. There is not much vegetation in or on them, much like the barren mountains we saw last fall in Spain. But occasionally you come upon a lovely fertile valley that makes up for miles of turns and tunnels on the way.

We sort of settled down in Florence - three days, and got our bearings after the previous sight-packed days. Here too we found a beautiful city, and from the point of view of art and treasures, much superior to Venice. Its situation is quite different, and no less picturesque. All around the city rise up the loveliest green rolling hills, but which are just sufficiently far away to make a magnificent horizon without giving the impression of hemming in. The weather was quite warm while we were there, in fact, I think we hit it at the best season for all the fruit trees were gloriously in bloom, the leaves at their freshest, and the grass its greenest. So if you should have a chance to come to Florence some time, I would recommend coming in the springtime and with the guarantee that you will find a lovely spot. We saw many interesting things there, so many that I'm afraid I cannot enumerate them all, though I would. If I had had more time ... Lists paintings.

Closing remarks. Sending a box home.

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Wed. May 12, 1954.

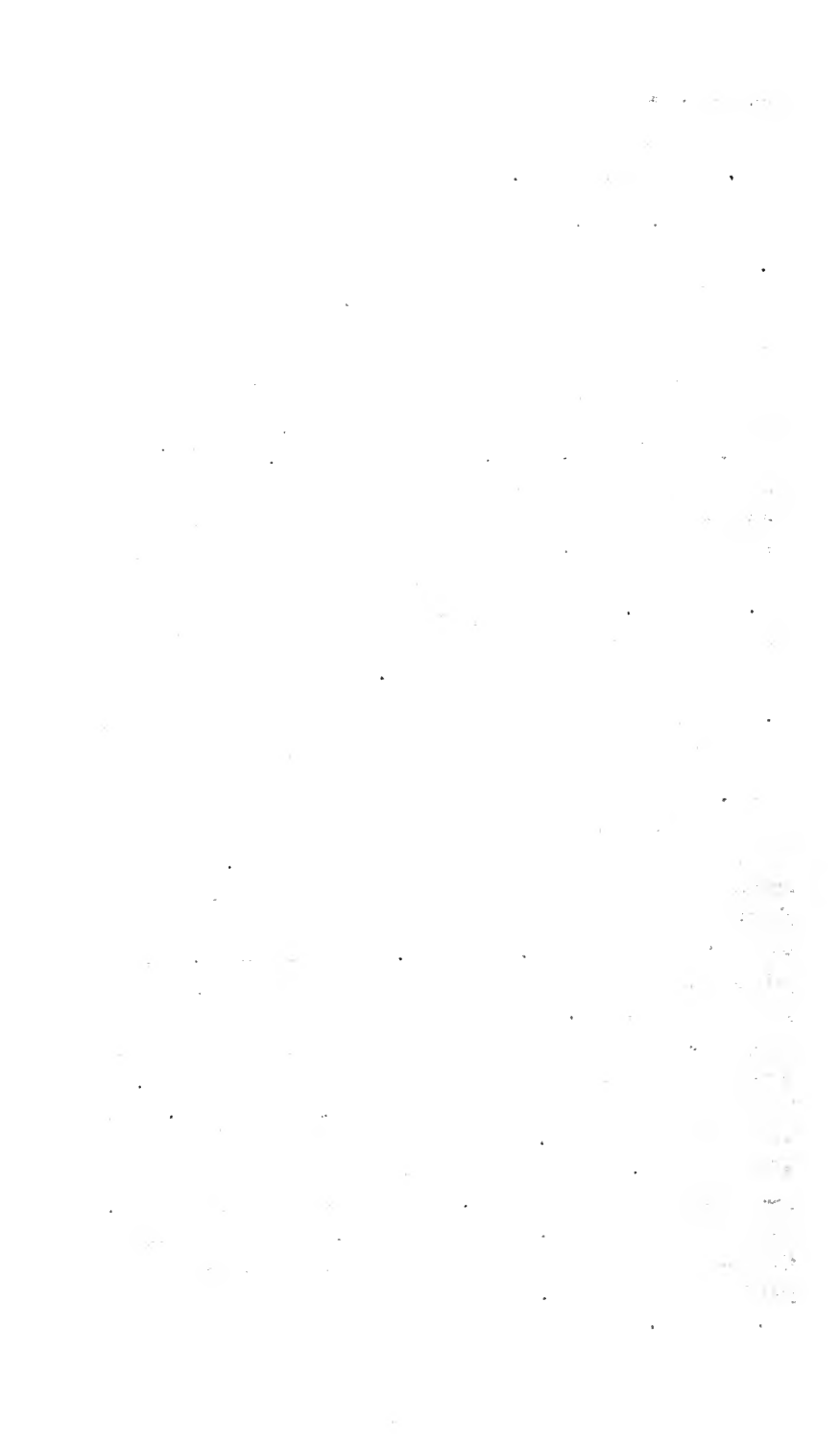
Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

1. Experiences with French postoffice on weight of airmail letters.
2. Thanks for a parcel received, and for news of Lindsay surrounding district.

Monday afternoon we had a visit from Father Rudolph Diemer, CSB, pastor of St. Basil's Church in Toronto. He is with a group of pilgrims to Lourdes for the holy year in honour of Mary. It was sure good to see him and get some of the recent developments around St. Mike's. He is comical anyway but some of his observations of European customs had Father Donovan and me in stitches.

4. Answers inquiries about need for clothes.
A money belt would be useful.

Well, last week I think we were just on our way to Assisi having managed to catch the end of the train pulling out of Florence. As we munched on a sandwich and an orange for breakfast we watched a beautiful green rolling countryside go by. At 11:00 we checked our bags at the Assisi station and took a taxi up to the city. The train brings you to a point that looks like it is close to the city but in fact it is more than a mile from it, a mile that climbs up a magnificent hill. At the Church of St. Francis we prayed at the tomb of St. Francis; and there I remembered you particularly, Dad, and your grandson too, of the same name. After dinner in a nearby restaurant where we had the waiter take our picture at table, we went to the church of St. Clare. As you remember she collaborated



with St. Francis in founding the Order of the Poor Clares, poor in the sense of poverty. Her body lies in state in the crypt under the sanctuary; after all these centuries it is still intact. To one side of the church is a room of relics where the Sisters open a small door to let you see the tunic of St. Francis, one of his sandals made for him by St. Clare, the alb in which he was ordained deacon, and the crucifix that spoke to him. From there we went to the church of St. Damian, the one that St. Francis literally began to repair when the crucifix told him "to repair my Church". There an old German monk took us around in company with three young German students from Munich. Half the time he talked German and half the time English, and neither the three students nor ourselves could tell when he was speaking German and when English. It was a comical tour, to be sure. But he was very jolly and sincere, and we could make out enough to know what he was pointing out. He showed us first the refectory where St. Clare at the bidding of the visiting Pope blessed the little loaf that each was about to eat; at that moment a cross was imprinted on each loaf. This occurred on Good Friday, and was hence the origin of hot corssed buns - at least, so the monk told us, not without a smile. Then he brought us to the choir behind the main altar in the church where the crucifix spoke to St. Francis. From there we went to the choir of the Poor Clares where the Sisters used to chant Office. What a rickety old set of stalls! The monk made sure we understood that the planks of the benches were 700 years old, and really, it didn't take

much persuasion. They looked every year of it. To one side he pointed out a niche in the wall just big enough for a man to stand in and be more or less hid. This was just what happened one day shortly after Francis had left his home to devote himself to rebuilding the church. His father, a rich merchant, came looking for him to bring him home; he had a stick in his hand. Francis ducked into the niche and stood close to the wall while his irate father passed through the chapel ready to chastize him in fine style once he found him. Then we went to the garden where St. Francis composed the Cantic of the Sun; and finally we saw the dormitory where St. Clare died. All these interesting things so took up our attention that we didn't notice the time going by. Suddenly we realized that we had a train to catch and that we were a good long distance from the station. The three Germans were taking the same train so we all walked down the big hill together. I should say we ran for it was a fast pace that they set us. On the way down we learned that they were all three Hitler youth who had spent several years in training camps for very young boys. They are graduating from the University of Munich this summer and entering the Seminary next Fall. We talked about several interesting things, partly in German, partly in English or Latin, such as the CED, and the last war. They assured us they were very happy to see the allies come into Germany for they were all tired of the privations and sufferings the war had by that time imposed on them. Well we got to the station in time and managed to get a seat for the last lap of

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our voyage, Assisi to Rome. It was a fairly slow trip though quite pleasant nonetheless. All along we had been noticing that the railway stations in Italy were very new looking, as modern as could be. Suddenly it dawned on us that they were probably all destroyed during the war and re-built. After that each new one we came to I wondered to myself if perchance Aust had "planted one" there, since if I remember rightly he went over to Italy a good many times. It was dark when we pulled into Rome, and to make our arrival more interesting the train let us all off at a station outside the main part of the city, not at the big central station. We made our way by bus and finally took a taxi for the trip to the Canadian College. Our two confreres, Fathers Eugene Malley and Terence Forestell, were of course waiting for us at the main station, so we got the College ahead of them and were waiting for them when they finally came back in bewilderment wondering what had happened to us. We gave them quite a riding for the fine reception they showed us on our entry into the Eternal City! The next day was Holy Thursday. After Mass at the College, we went to the first thing in Rome to be seen, St. Peter's. Maybe I better let the description go until next time ...

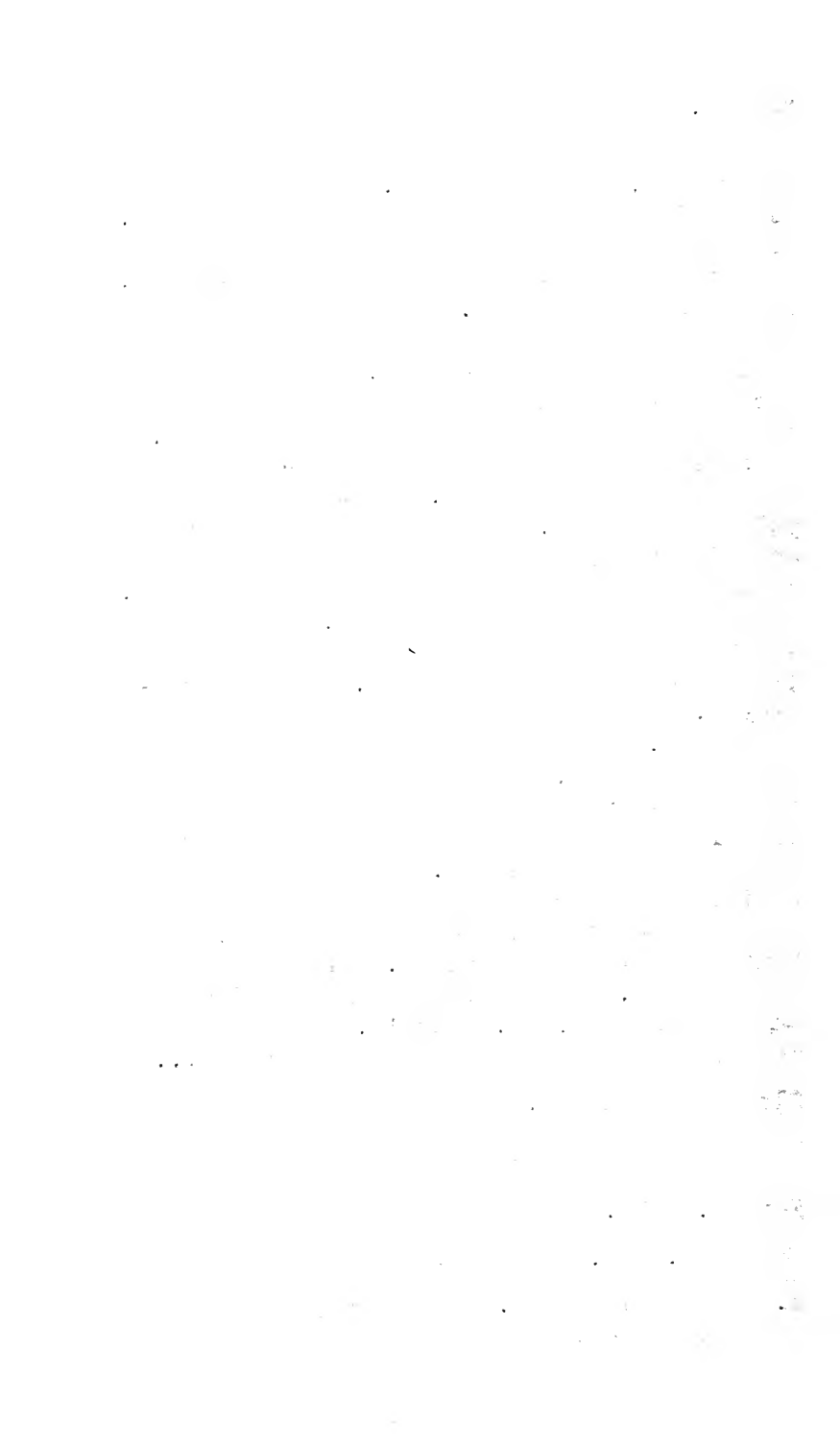
Closing greetings.

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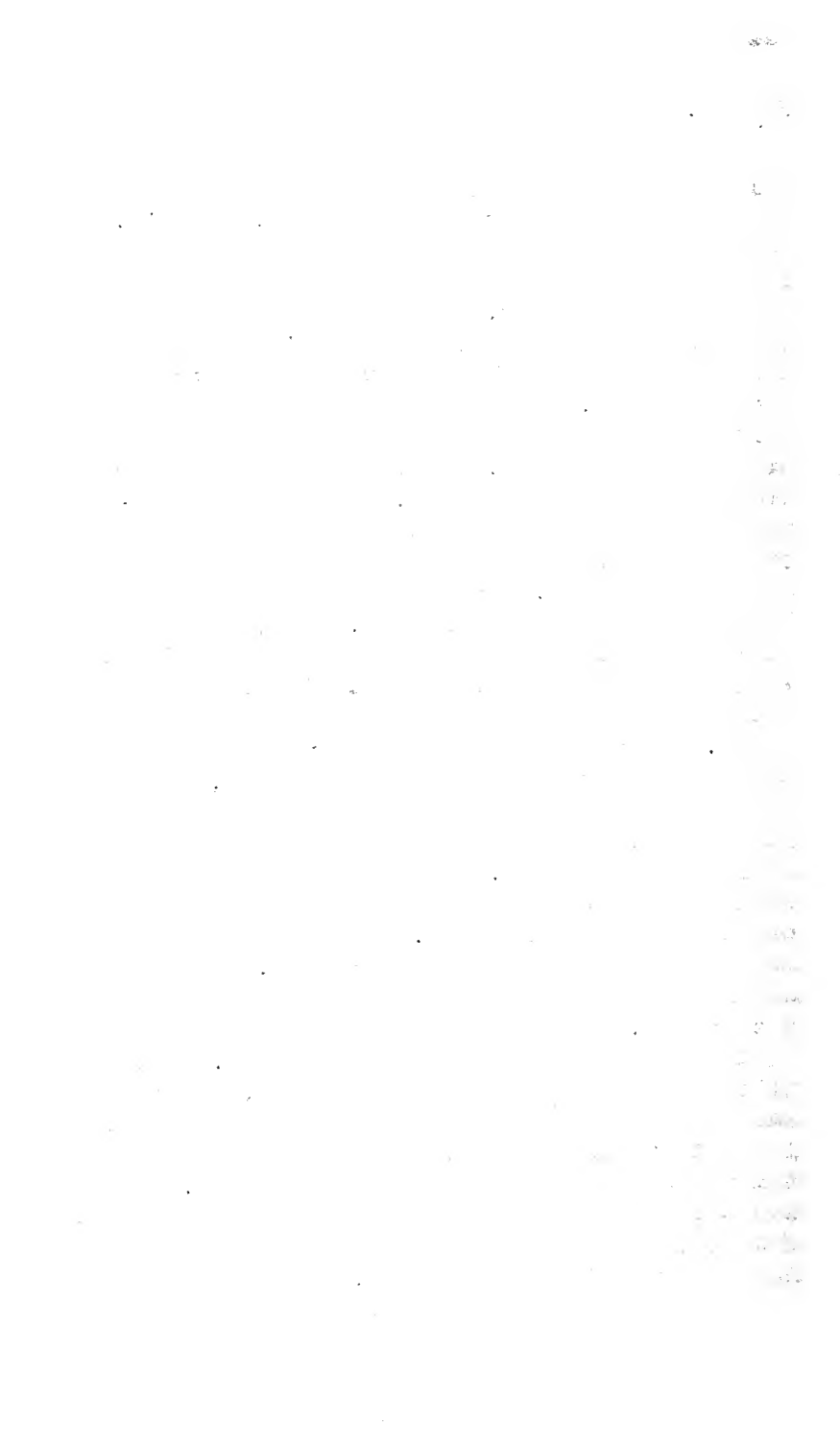
May 19, 1954.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

1. Weather in Paris. Acknowledges letter with photographs.



Well last week I think we were preparing to go out and pay a first visit to St. Peter's. So as Father Charles Lanphier used to say last year on his program "We climb onto a crowded Italian bus, and away we go down to the Piazza San Pietro!" He wasn't kidding when he mentioned that the buses were crowded; they sure are. You have to start getting off well before your stop to be able to make it at the right moment. Fortunately the Italian people are very courteous, and once you pronounce that magic word "permeso" (I am not sure of the spelling) they immediately make room somehow or other. My first glimpse of the basilica was one of surprise, surprise that it was not actually as big as I had imagined. It is large mind you, but doesn't leave you breathless as I had wrongly presupposed it would. As we made our way across the paved space in front of it it began to grow, and by the time we had mounted the steps and stood in the doorway I must confess I felt pretty small in comparison. The first entry only brings you into the vestibule; the second set of doors is even grander. From them you come into the tremendous edifice itself. Once again I must confess the sense of grandeur escaped me, for it seemed that I had seen before a nave as big and a roof as high. But after the morning was over, that is, after we had walked around for what seemed like miles, I was convinced that it was the biggest darn thing under one roof I had ever visited. (I say this with all due respect to the basilica). Take this judgment for what it is worth for I am neither artist nor critic, but it seems to me that the beauty of St. Peter's does not



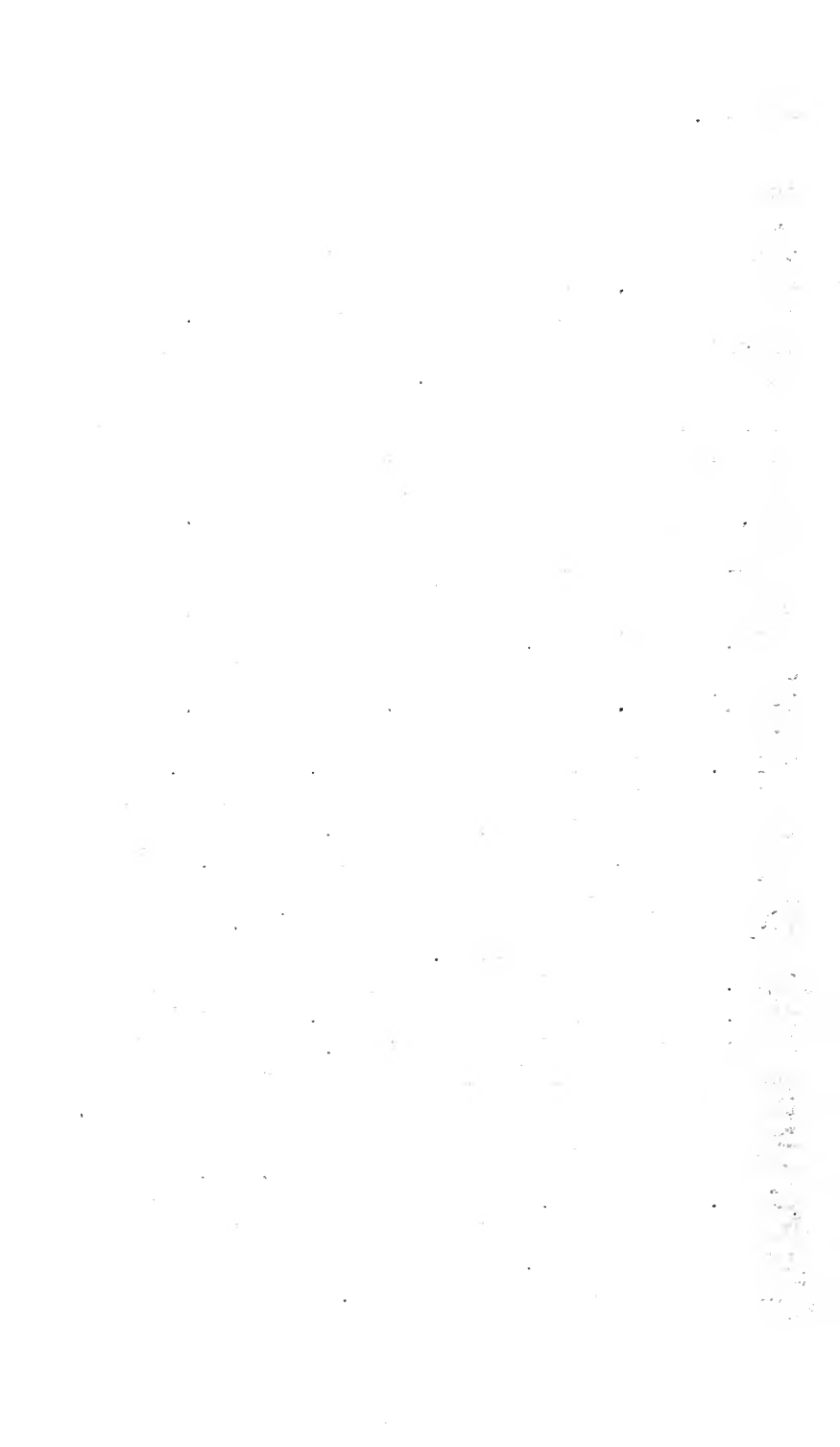
lie in its architecture. The high graceful arches of the French cathedrals go far beyond it in beauty of form and line. What appeared more beautiful to me was first the wonderful arrangement of coloured marble. Everywhere you look, up the huge pillars, down the long walls, in and out of the many chapels, you can see a most pleasing array of colour formed by the correct placing of the natural marble. Secondly, I was struck by the magnificent big pictures over the various altars, done in rich varied colours, and all in mosaic. So fine is the workmanship that I was almost ready to bet the pictures were done on canvas, until very close observation led me to admit they were composed of tiny bits of stoen, each again in its own natural color. And thirdly, I was most impressed, as I guess everyone else is, by the colossal dome over the main altar. We took time out to mount it to the top, or as high as we could get, where we found an exit leading on to a railed walk from which we had a grand view of the Vatican gardens and buildings, and also of the whole city of Rome. An elevator brings you up to the top of the top of the basilica which is only to the base of the dome. Even from there when you look down into the church below the people walking around seem incredibly small. Then begins the climb of the dome proper through a winding narrow stair-case that forces you to lean with the curve of the dome itself. As I puffed my way up I hoped to myself that Michael Angelo had put in lots of supports for I knew it was a long way from the floor of the sanctuary. We got down just

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in time to get in on part of a ceremony where we were blessed with the relic of the true cross, the holy spear that pierced the side of Our Lord, and the veil that Veronica presented to Christ. We were to come to St. Peter's later on in Easter week to say Mass at the tomb of St. Peter.

Since it was Holy Thursday we spent the afternoon visiting repositories. We did not have to go very far to arrive at 12 churches in all, so close are they together in Rome. The different altars were decked out gorgeously in flowers of all sorts. That evening we went to Tenebrae at the monastery of St. Anselm, Benedictine, where we heard the plain chant sung by the monks very correctly and beautifully. The next day, Good Friday, brought us some bad weather; it was cold and rainy. This did not prevent us, however, from going out to a few churches in the vicinity, one of them being St. Praxedes. It was here I procured the relic of Blessed Pius X. We saw here too the pillar to which Our Lord was bound during the scouring with whips. It is quite a low marble post, less than three feet tall, the top being somewhat larger than the stem, but smaller than the base. There is nothing very striking about it, which fact perhaps serves to remind us even better of that terrible episode in the Passion of Christ. In the afternoon under a driving wind and rain we went out the Appian Way to the catacombs of St. Callistus. Despite the weather there was a great crowd waiting for the guides to take them through. By reason of the numbers our tour was only a short one. We were underground not more than fifteen minutes; but in



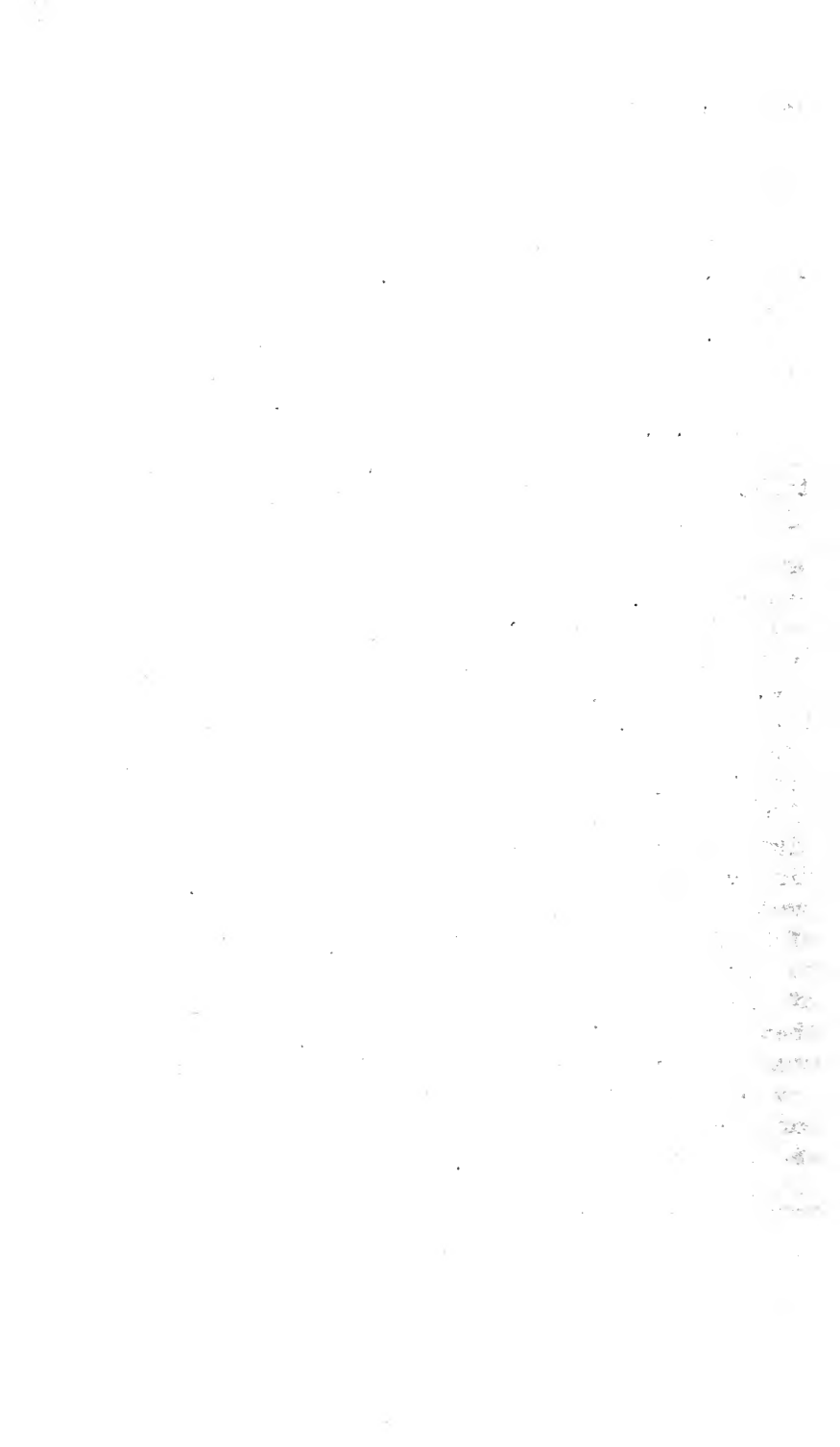
that short time we saw the spot where St. Cecilia's body was found. It is marked by a marble statue showing her body slain, and her hand professing the doctrine of the Trinity by extending three fingers. We were led along several corridors where the empty tombs are visible on either side in the walls. Then before we knew it we were led out, the tour being over. So not being satisfied with our visit to the catacombs, we decided to come back another day later on the following week. We did just that, but not to the same place; we went to the catacombs of St. Agnes which I will describe more in detail when we get there. It was on the way back from St. Callistus that we stopped in at the Quo Vadis? church and saw the stone in the floor bearing the footprints of Our Lord turned back towards Rome. We were soaked to the skin when we got back to the Canadian College, but miracle of miracles none of us were any the worse for the chill. We made a quick change of clothes (I had to borrow a few things from Terry Forrestell) and went down to an interesting ceremony at the chapel of the Russian College. There is a student there from St. Michael's College whom we knew, studying for the priesthood with the intention of going to Russia at the first possible opportunity for Mission work. The priests there at the Russicum (that is the name of the Russian College in Rome) are all of the Byzantine rite. Good Friday afternoon they have the beautiful ceremony of the Burial of the Shroud. The chant that accompanies it is of the most melodious and moving I have ever heard. It is extremely simple, quiet and subdued with a

touch of the mystery of the East in it, which effect never seems to come out in our chant of the Roman rite. I found it very enjoyable indeed, and very intriguing. Our friend, Arthur Gibson, had copies of the text ready for us, translated from the Russian, and brought us up to front seats where we could watch everything in all its detail. I think Father E.J. McCorkell witnessed it when he was in Rome for Easter last year, so if you get talking to him you'll have to ask him how he liked it.

Holy Saturday was cold and windy but at least not raining. We went down with an elderly Sulpician priest, Père Robin, to the Roman Forum and the Palatine. He is a retired priest now, and spends his time conducting such tours through Rome. Having lived there for over forty years he knows the details pretty well. With his explanations and the help of a big illustrated book that shows what things looked like back in the Roman times we had a very fine visit that lasted the whole morning. Just as we were among the ruins of the palace of Domitian the big bells of St. Peter's began to ring out, and were soon joined by the bells of all the 500 or more churches in Rome - they were marking the end of Lent. It was wonderful to hear and we couldn't help thinking of the triumph of Christianity over the pagan cults and customs in the ruins of which we stood at that moment.

Closing remarks.

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May 27, 1954

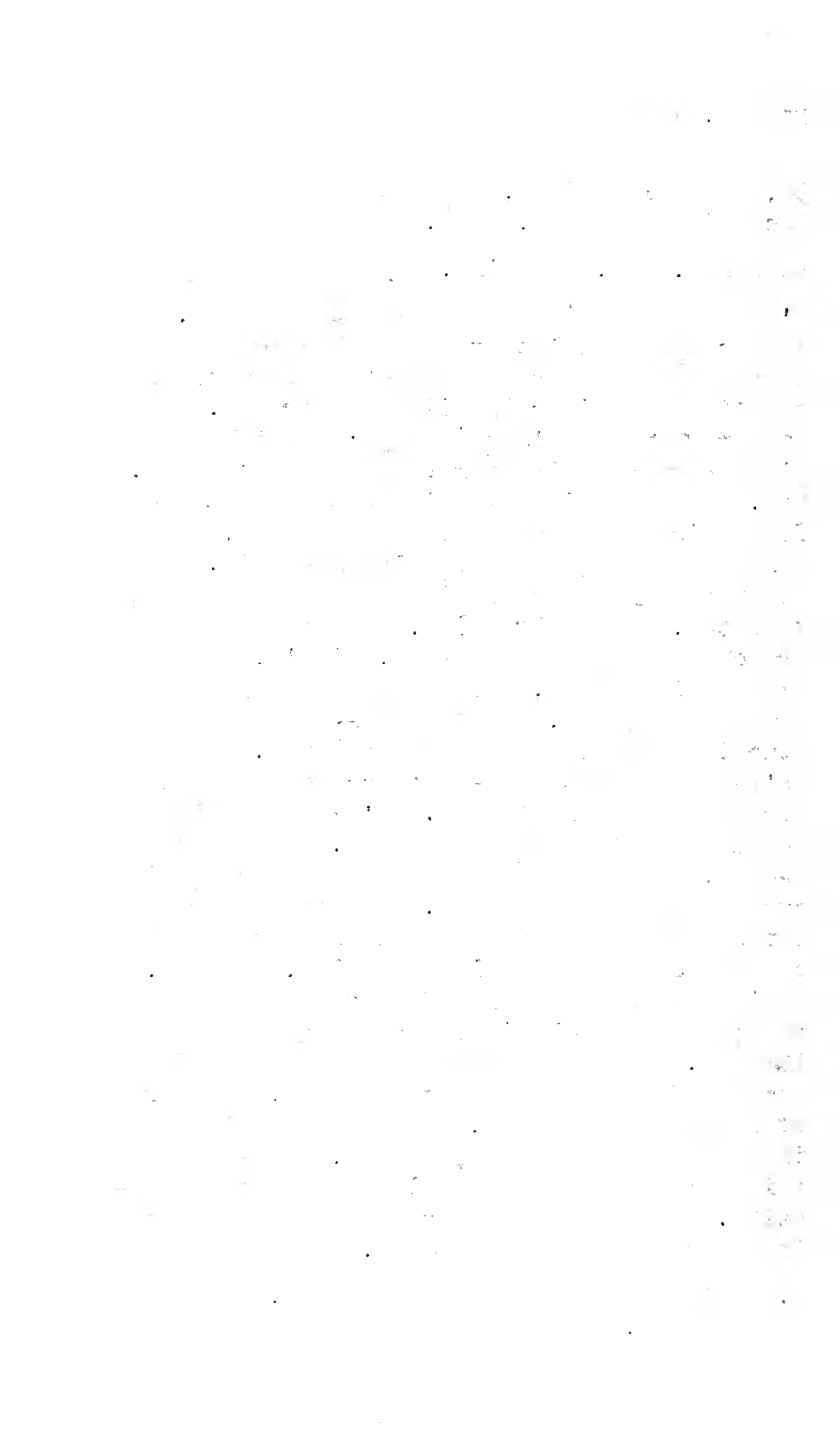
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36, rue Guilleminot, Paris 14;
Ascension Thursday, 1954.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

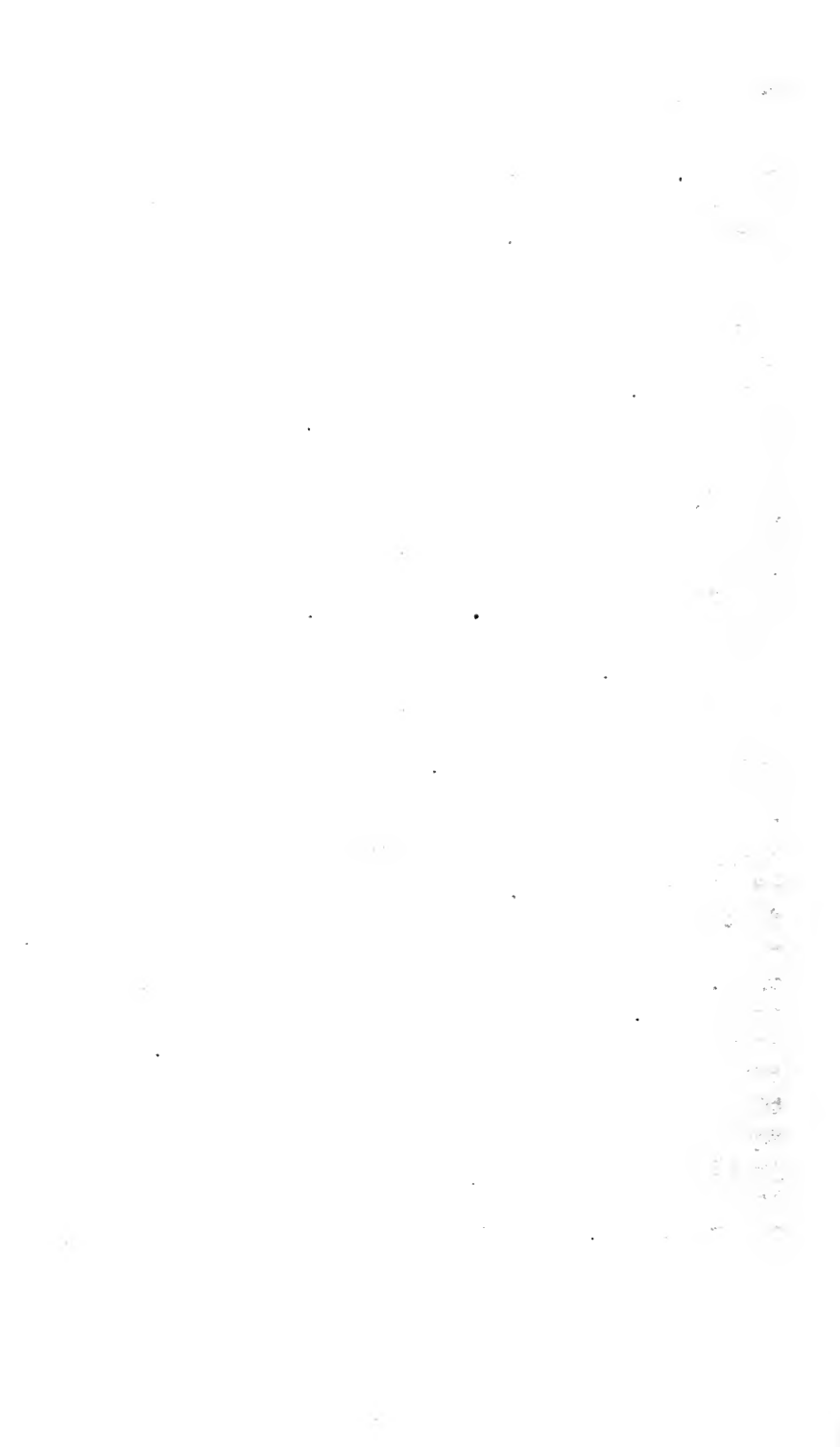
I'm sorry this is a day later than usual. A long complicate letter that I had to get off to one of my confreres yesterday took up all the time that I ordinarily give to you. It was from Father Platt (Wally); I think you might remember him from the Marian Congress, Mom. He is coming over in September to study for a Licentiate also at the Sorbonne, and asked me for some information about it. Two other Basilians are coming to Paris for next year too, Father Leo Klem, who taught me French for four years at St. Mike's, and Father Bill Young, who was ordained just a year ahead of me, and has spent the past year studying for his doctorate at ^{aval}. So we'll be quite a good-sized community in the French capital next year. I'll have a time keeping three of them in order. Last week we had a visit from Father Joseph Dorsey who is over here for the summer. He has to represent the University of Toronto at an educational conference in July held at Dublin, Ireland. He is getting in a bit of travelling before that; right now he is in Rome for the canonization. And last night we had dinner with Father Malley of Rochester diocese, brother of Father Gene Malley, who has been studying in Rome for the past two years. He left here this morning to go down also for the canonization. So you see we have been sort of keeping touch with the New World.

2. Solicitude for health of mother. Approach of exams.

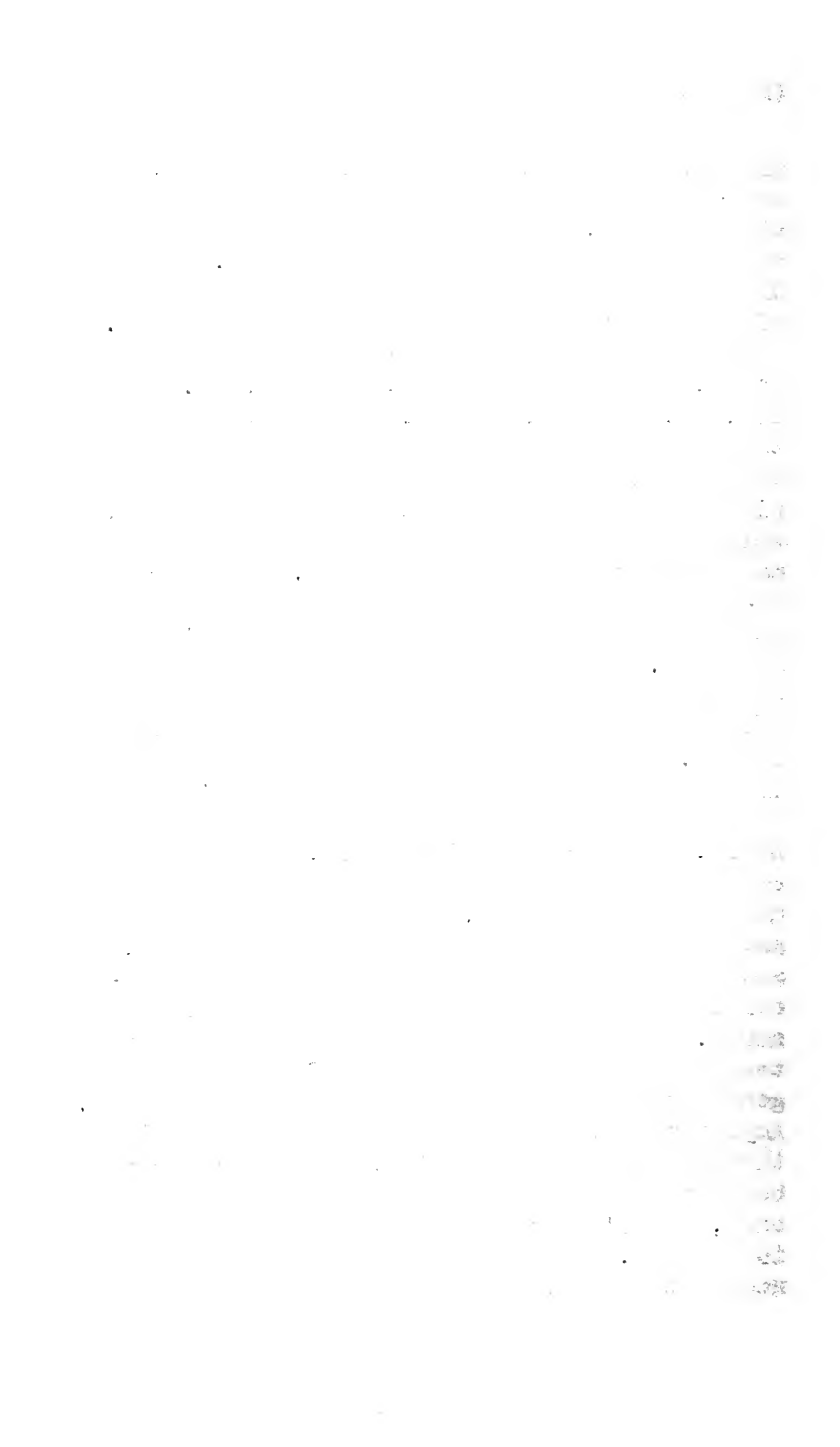


Well, let's tour a bit more of Rome. Last week I think we had just heard all the bells ringing on Holy Saturday. That afternoon we walked about in the city without any particular destination in mind, and first thing we knew we ran into a group of the French Basilians from Annonay. Seven of them had come down to Rome for Easter and were visiting about much the same as ourselves. I had made the acquaintance of some of them at Christmas time when we stayed with them at St. Alban, if you recall. They are a great bunch and we had an enjoyable visit with them both that afternoon and again later on the next week. Holy Saturday night three of us went down to St. John Lateran's for the blessing of the new fires, of the baptismal font, pascal candle, etc., followed by midnight Mass celebrated by one of the Cardinals whose name I have forgotten. Easter Sunday I said Mass at the Canadian College where we are staying and around 11:00 a.m. all of us went down to St. Peter's Square to see the Holy Father. Since we arrived an hour ahead of time we were able to get up close to the steps that lead into the cathedral from which we had a very good view of the loggia where he was to appear. We assisted at outdoor Mass, sang several hymns all together, and finally heard the Holy Father's voice coming over the loudspeakers. He was giving his Easter address to the world. Shortly after that the two doors on which we had our eyes glued for some time back slowly opened and out he came all in white. We immediately burst into cheering, "Viva il Papa", as did everyone else in that throng-filled

square. My Anglo-Saxon blood gave me enough sang-froid to take a snap of him during those first few moments, but someone more enthusiastic in front of me happened to wave his hand in front of the camera and very effectively brought my composure to naught as I was to discover later one when the film was developed. The Holy Father waved at us all in a kind and enthusiastic way. At first I thought he was urging us on to more and greater shouts for he was waving something like a cheerleader or a symphony director who wants to bring out more volume. I was to learn afterwards that that is the customary way for the Italians to wave greetings. When the roar subsided somewhat he gave the Apostolic Benediction. This time I was able to snap him without interference. He did not stay long outside since it was his first appearance since his illness. Some of the crowd dispersed after he had disappeared from the loggia but the great majority stayed around hoping he would appear again at the window of his apartments. We waited for close to fifteen minutes calling out and waving now and again in groups hoping the windows would open. Finally they did and he came into view once more. Once more the cheers rose up as he waved to us in the same kindly manner. After he had disappeared from view the second time we turned and made our way out of the square very happy indeed to have had that privilege of seeing the Holy Father in person and of receiving his blessing in the great square of St. Peter's on Easter Sunday morning.



The next day I enjoyed another privilege, that of saying Mass on the main altar in the Lady Chapel of St. Mary Major that is the centre of the devotions for the Marian Year. It was later on that same day that we visited the oldest church in Rome dedicated to Our Lady. While on that same tour we prayed at the tombs of St. Paul Eymard and St. Cecilia, St. Justin, St. Stephen, and St. Lawrence. At the tomb of the latter is displayed the grid-iron on which the saint was martyred. I always pictured it as some sort of metal framework, but in reality it is a huge slab of white marble with holes pierced in it. The guide makes sure you understand that the discoloration on one side comes from the saint's burning body. We didn't actually heed that bit of gruesome information to be deeply impressed but the Italians are less squeamish on such things. Before coming home that evening we called in at the big cemetery where I'm sure the monuments must be the most modern in the world. Rome abounds in marble, and when it comes to erecting something in honour of their dead they go all out. Several of the graves had little Roman lamps burning before them, and up and down the long avenues people circulated in and out slowly praying for the souls. As they leave the cemetery they have the custom of turning back to face the graves, genuflecting and making the sign of the cross. Anyone that walks straight out without doing the same is not an Italian. It struck me as being a lovely gesture towards their loved ones, and I'm sure must date a long way back in history. On Tuesday we went through the new North American College guided by one of



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the Seminarians whose picture you will see among the snaps. It is a magnificent building, perhaps the most up to date in Rome. From there we went to the lovely old basilica of St. Paul's outside the walls. It is not so huge as St. Peter's but in many ways is more beautiful. While in that vicinity we paid a visit to the Trappist monastery that is built on the site where St. Paul is said to have been martyred. They are famous for their chocolate and liquor there so I picked up a little sample of the latter for Dad, and have added it to the collection I'm making. Patience, Dad, I hope to deliver it to you personally before too long. Then we came back into the city proper and went to the church of St. Clement, now run by the Irish Dominicans; and then to the prison where Sts. Peter and Paul were kept. Wednesday morning I said Mass by the tomb of St. Peter for you all. Since it was raining that day we confined our visiting to inside projects, the most outstanding being the great dome of St. Peter's. We mounted it almost to the top, that is as far as they would let us go. It is a tremendous sensation to follow the narrow curving stairway up around the dome leaning in toward the centre. There is no danger of falling for you go up inside the wall, but nevertheless you can't help thinking that the wall might possibly crumble. The next day was my last full one in Rome. In the morning Father Terence McLaughlin took me through the Vatican Museum. It is wonderfully rich in paintings, sculpturings, and other artistic works. The Sistine Chapel is really something to see. Michaelangelo certainly took on a good-sized

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job when he started to decorate that. The end wall represents the Day of Judgment, Christ the Judge is in the centre, the good on one side and the wicked on the other. One of the Canons of the time criticized Michaelangelo for painting so many nudes in the picture; and to his horro some days later he saw himself painted among the damned at the very bottom of Hell. Temperamental artists! Closing remarks.

* * *

June 2, 1954, Wed.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

1. News from home about the birth of a nephew.

There isn't much news from over here. Each day pretty well resembles the one before it, books, notes, books, an occasional trip to the library, which inevitably means more books and notes. Oh well, in another few weeks it will all be over, at least for awhile. My confrere here, Father Dick Donovan, is leaving for Spain this week to do some manuscript work in connection with his thesis in the different libraries over there; so I'll be an orphan for the latter part of the year. Just what the summer will bring I'm not sure yet. By the way, I'm sorry that money-belt caused you so much hunting. I guess they are a rare sort of thing. Don't try too hard to find one because there is a little leather shop nearby here that promised to make one up if I could not locate a ready made one.

Well, if we are to get back to Paris from our

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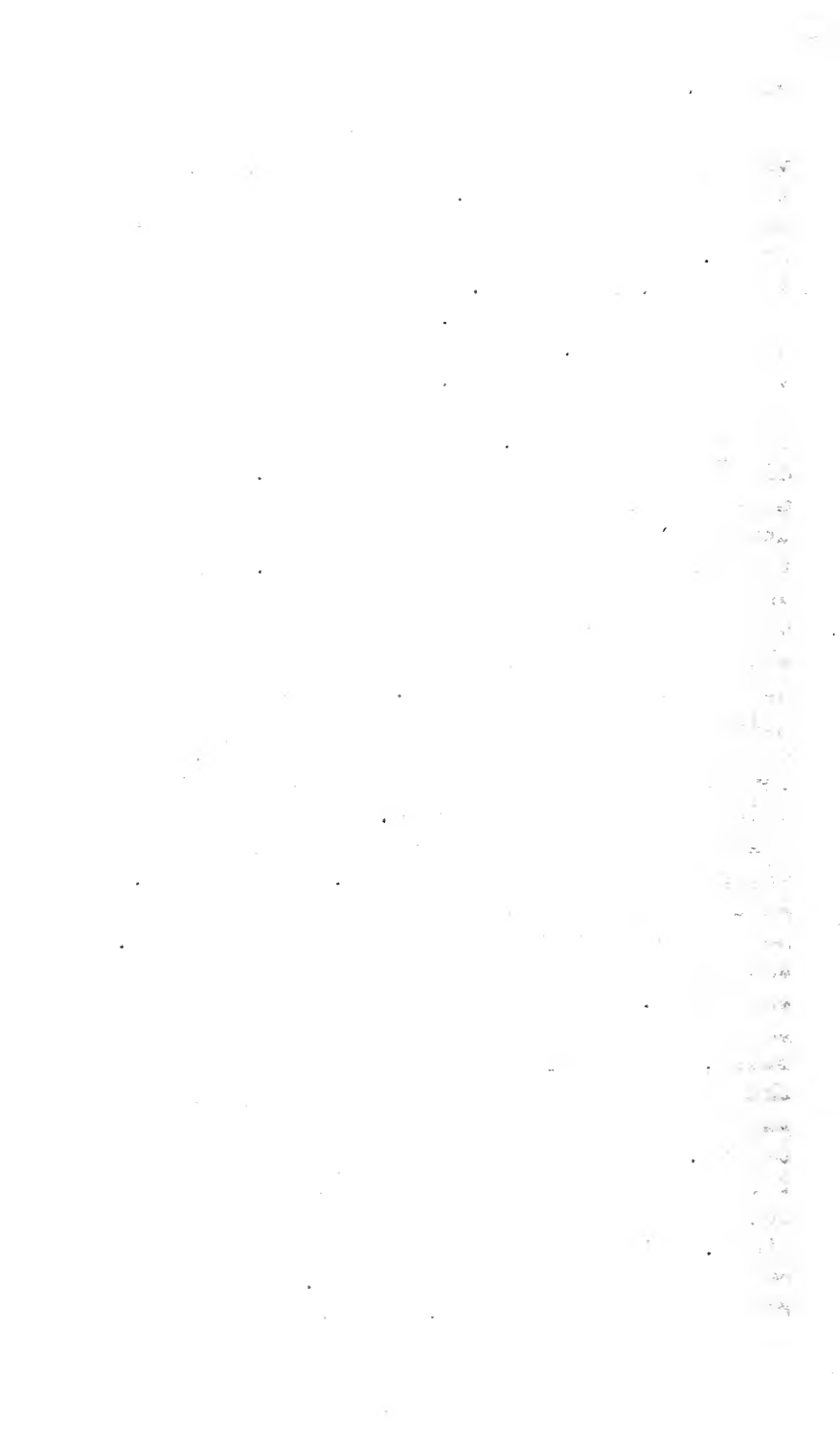
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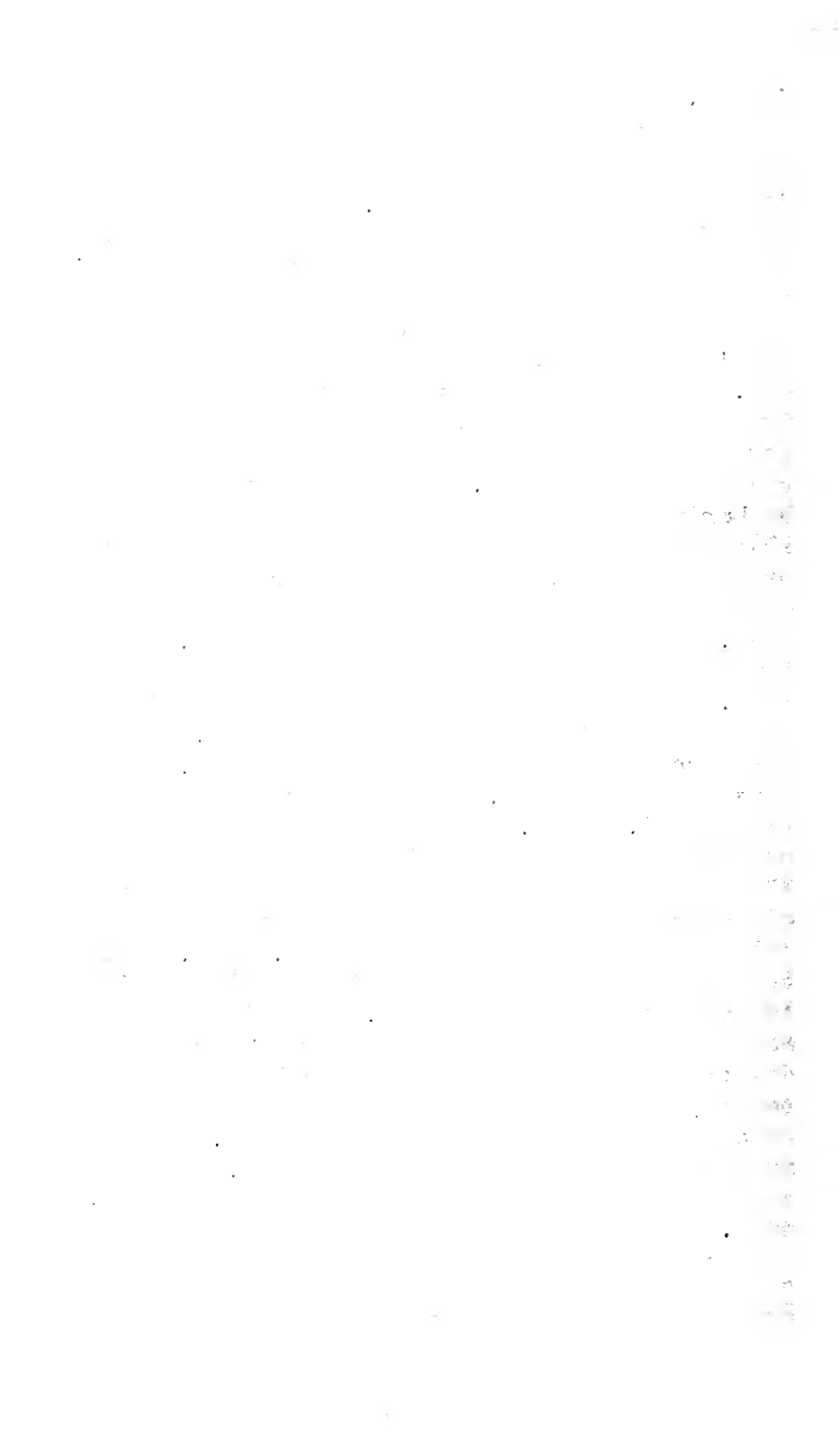
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visit to Rome I think we will have to get travelling right away, as the trip is a long one and not without a few interesting stop-overs. We had just visited the Sistine chapel I believe, last week. That was on Thursday morning of Easter week. In the afternoon we went out to St. Agnes Church to have a better visit of the catacombs. This time we saw them in much more detail and in the company of far less people. A very kind and comical old Italian priest took us through. He made sure we each had a wax candle before going down and taught us how to hold it so that the draughts would not blow it out. From a door in the corner of the sacristy we went down about twenty steps following our venerable guide who spoke very good French but not quite so good English. Each time he was going to switch from one language to the other he would warn us with the phrase, "maintenant je vais changer le disc" - now I'm going to change the record. He led us along a low narrow winding tunnel here and there until we were absolutely lost, all but him. At intervals he would point out inscriptions on the walls carved by the early Christians, usually on the plaques of marble that enclosed the tombs. For the first few hundred yards the corridors were dimly lit by small electric bulbs, but finally we came into regions where the dampness prevented their installation and where consequently we had to make use of our tapers. Thank Heavens he knew the way around for dark tunnels and hallways carved in the rock went off to right and left at every few steps. I'm sure we never would have found our way back if we had lost him. Since the rock is very soft stone, tuffa, the Christians



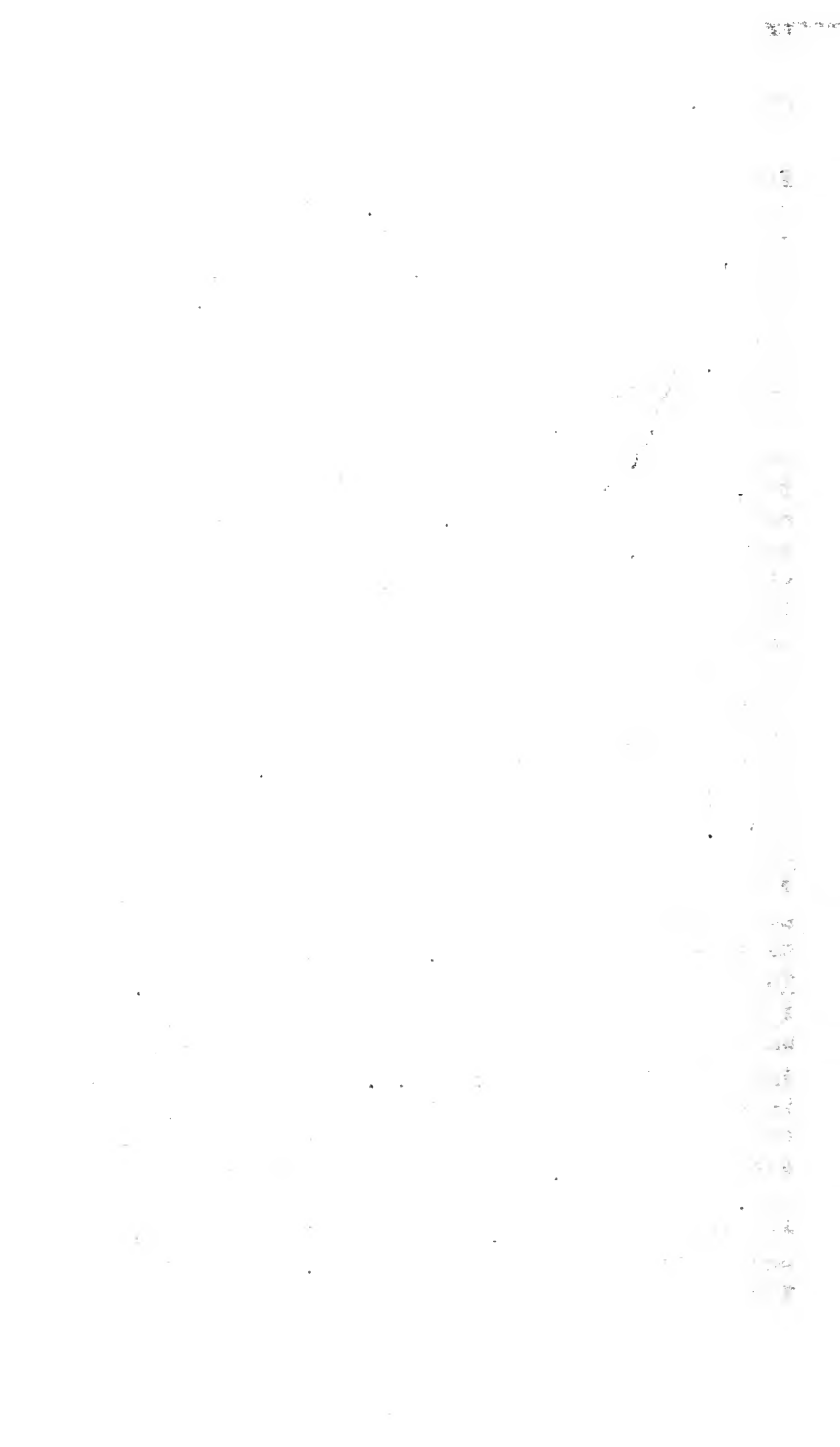
had not trouble diggin in it in whichever direction they needed to go. I thought to myself if perchance the heart of our old guide should suddenly give out and leave us stranded, there is one Christian that is going to start digging straight up; he may come out in somebody's back yard, but at least he will come out. Some places the ceiling of the passages is higher than others, but always with tombs, low rectangular excavations, from the floor right up to the tops. During Vandal and barbarian raids in the 4th and 5th centuries almost all the tombs were broken into and the bones scattered. The invaders occasionally found some things of value buried with the body, hence the raids on the cemeteries. I think we only saw one tomb that was still intact. Finally we found ourselves coming into passageways better lighted and roomier. We were probably directly under the church, perhaps the main altar, for we arrived at the tomb of St. Agnes. Here we looked through openings into a rather large excavation well lighted where the central object is the silver casket containing the saint's bones. It was only as recently as the Holy Year, 1950, that the Holy Father gave permission for the public to go down so near her tomb. From there we soon found the stairs by which we had come down; the old priest carefully collected the remains of our candles and wished us many graces through the intercession of St. Agnes as we made our way out of the church. It was a grand tour and another unforgettable experience.

The next morning found Terry Forestell and me at the staion a good half hour before my train

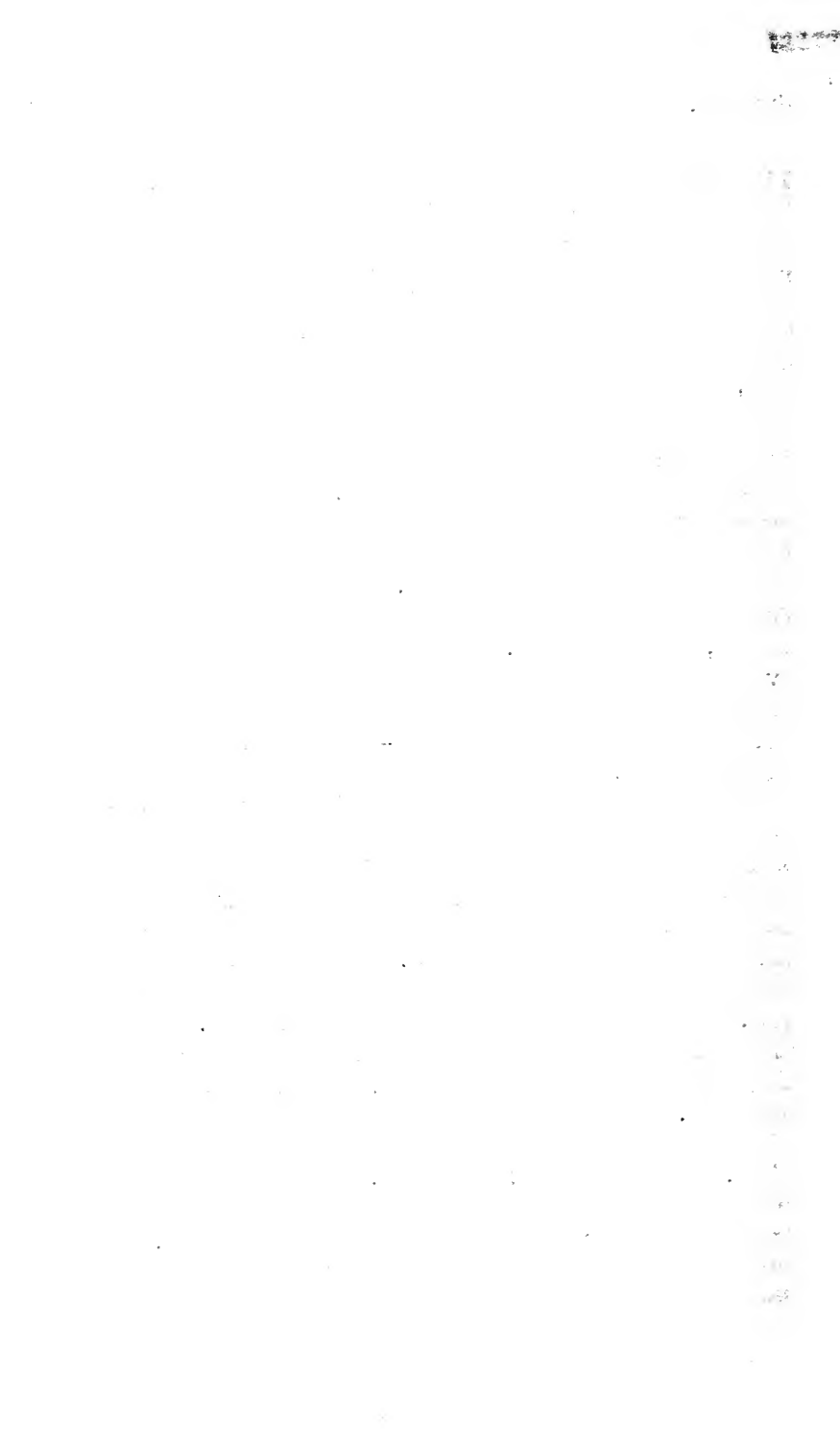


was due to pull out searching wildly for a vacant seat. We were among about 5,000 who were doing the same thing. Twice I settled down in a coach compartment considering myself very lucky to have found a seat and twice I was ushered out by the conductor who informed me I was in a reserved section. Eventually, however, we found a place in a compartment for eight reserved to Paris which had only seven passengers in it, six of them young Parisian ladies and one Italian student of chemistry on his way to Turin, who, I think, was glad to see me come in to keep him company. I got off at Pisa around noon, and after having dinner, went up to the cathedral and to the famous leaning tower which is just beside it. What a strang sensation you experience as you climb up those 294 steps round and round leaning first this way then that. It is really frightening when you are drawn towards the low side for you have the impression it is slowly toppling over. Someone here told me when I got back that experts say it is leaning more and more each year. If I had known that at the time I don't think I ever would have attempted the climb. To one side of the cathedral is a separate building, the baptistry, much the same arrangement as at Florence, except that this one is more beautifully decorated on the outside. The interior is quite plain, but it has a curious characteristic: the dome is so shaped that it holds an echo for quite some time. One of the guides who was showing some tourists around sang four notes, a major chord. I believe (my knowledge of music is limited) and the dome held the harmony for several seconds. After he had finished singing the

Fourth note the sound was as though four voices were holding a chord. I've heard guides do the same thing before, in the chapel of the Pope's castle at Avignon, for example, but I never heard the echoes resound so long. It must be something to hear a High Mass sung in there. Around 4:30 I made my way back on the Pisa street-car to the station and caught the train for Genoa. It was a lovely day and the scenery along the talisn Riviera is lovely too, but the only difficulty is that one does not see too much of it. Since the coast is very rocky, in places the mountains going straight up from the ocean, the train winds its way along through one tunnel after another. Occasionally there is a "window" in the rock at which moment everyone stretches to that side of the train to have a look at the lazy waves slowly washing the strip of yellow sand or breaking into foam on the rocks, and then whoof! midnight again for another few thousand yards. Since I got into Genoa after nine at night and left fairly early the next morning I did not see any more of the city than what was visible from my window in the Missionary Seminary where I stayed. A curious incident happened before Mass the following morning. A Chinese student got up early as I did for he was also just staying overnight and catching a train around 8:00 a.m. The two of us tried to find the chapel in the Seminary. He thought I was a member of the staff or something like that, and I thought the same of him. He spoke no French nor Spanish but only Italian and Chinese, both of which I understand with no little difficulty. He thought I was showing him down to the chapel, and I



likewise thought he was bringing me there. The tow of us ended up in the refectory! At this stage he caught on I was also a complete stranger in the house, and having tried to make himself understood in Italian while I kept articulating in my best French he said as well as I could have said it myself, "You don't by any chance speak English?" During our wanderings up and downstairs and corridors it had occurred to neither of us to try the language both of us knew best. Things went more smoothly from then on. After Mass and breakfast (a bowl of coffee and one bun) I made off on the train to Milan. Here I had but a few minutes to change for the train to Interlaken, Switzerland. There being no seats available in any of the compartments in second class I found a little sort of chair that folds up against the wall - they call them Strapontins. It was not the best but I had a good view out the window and was quite content to stay there for three or four hours when a gentleman came out of first class and asked me in very French-Canadian French if I knew what connections or changes were to be made to get to Interlaken. I had all the information he needed for I was going there too. A few questions as to origin etc. led us to learn that we were more or less from the same region - he being from Sturgeon Falls, Ontario. So I was immediately brought into his private compartment and introduced to his wife. They are Mr. and Mrs. Levesque who often go over to North Bay and promised me they would look up Sister Mary Agnes at the Hospital. It was quite a coincidence to run into a fellow countryman and ride with him through part of



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Switzerland. What a beautiful ride it was too! The mountain scenery is magnificent. This time I really saw the Alps in all their glory under a bright sun and clear blue sky. It was so striking I'll have to let it go till next time. Next week we'll get to Paris for sure.

* * *

June 9, 1954.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

1. Acknowledges receipt of letters.
2. About a parcel sent home.

Since last writing you I received permission from Father Hubert Coughlin to spend some time this summer in the British Isles. I have not really had time to plan the trip in any detail yet, but you may be sure a good part of it will be devoted to Ireland. If possible I would like to make my annual retreat at Clendalough, the monastery founded by St. Kevin. And I would also like to visit the region of my ancestors. Could you give me any information about that? Any names of parents and cities might be helpful, and dates too, if you can recall any, that are significant in our geneological history. I hope to leave Paris for England July 1 or thereabouts. More of that later.

The feast of St. Basil, June 14, will be a unique one for me this year for I write both of my certificate exams on that day. I only have two written exams and both of them happen to fall on the 14th: 7:30 to 11:30 a.m., and 1:30 to 5:30 p.m. Some session. But I'm counting on St. Basil to be on the job pushing

the pen in the right directions. The three orals will be some time later, a week or ten days after that date. In the meantime the preparations go on apace by reason of which I ask you to receive a shorter letter this time than the previous ones.

In the account of our Easter trip I believe there remained only Interlaken to be described, and in fact it is so beautiful there that many pages would be necessary to do it any justice. We arrived about 5:00 in the afternoon when the sun was beginning to set and cast a rose-coloured light on the snowy summits of the surrounding mountains. I think I shall never forget that evening. After getting a room in a little hotel near the Catholic Church I went out and walked around gazing in sheer wonder and delight at the unbelievable scenery until the darkness slowly hid it all from my range of vision. The principal mountain in the district is the Jungfrau, 4158 metres, I think. What can be seen of it from the city is entirely covered with snow and when bathed in the light of the setting sun it is a picture that refuses to let you turn away. At the time I saw it there was a little cloud floating on one side of it quite some distance below the top. It seemed to etherealize that tremendous mass of whiteness and make it even loftier. I remember taking a picture of it but unfortunately it did not come out. The town too is very picturesque; the lawns, flowers and pools so carefully tended reminded me of the park at Niagara. And yet, in spite of all its natural beauty the town is not expensive. It afforded one more pleasant memory of Switzerland. The next

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morning, Sunday, after Mass, I took the train to Bern, had dinner there, and came on to Paris in the afternoon pulling into the Gare de Lyon from which we started our tour several days previously. Paris looked good, actually, for it had developed its Spring considerably in our absence; and I couldn't help feeling a little more at home in it after such a long series of strange places. It was a wonderful Easter vacation and I really think I learned more than I would have had I studied all that time.

Closing remarks.

* * *

36, rue Guilleminot, Paris 14,
June 16, 1954.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

It is with somewhat of a lighter heart this week that I write you than last, now that the two written exams are a thing of the past. I will not know the results until about ten days hence, but I feel that I should have scraped through. It was a rather tough day, Monday, but your good prayers gave me the strength to see it through to the end. During the afternoon session I really felt like handing in my paper with a couple of hours to go and saying to heck with it, that's enough for one day. But six o'clock found me still there putting the finishing touches on the final copy. If they mark the papers as hard as they did the exercises during the year it may go hard with me, but I'm hoping for a bit of leniency on their

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part. That may be too much to expect, but in any case I'm going ahead these days with the preparation of the orals that are to begin June 24.

Thanks very much for your last letter, Mom, and for the Mass intention. I will get saying the Mass soon. The clipping is also interesting. Assumption made a great stride ahead in their history when they received last year the power to confer degrees independently of the University of Western Ontario. I understand, however, that a problem has arisen since, namely, that Bishop Cody has authorized the building of a Catholic men's college in Windsor and has the favour of Western to such an extent that the University is going to put up the building for him. Where does that leave the Basilians? I fear it was quite a shock to Father Carlisle LeBel to hear that item of news, particularly since the Bishop had promised them at Assumption special help both material and moral. We'll have to pray that no conflict arises, and that it will all work out for the good of Catholic education in that diocese.

Yesterday I had a visit with Father Joseph Dorsey, teacher of English at St. Michael's College. He had been here a while back on his way down to Rome for the canonization. This time he stopped in on his way to London. I think he should be almost there now for he left early this morning. My partner, Father Dick Donovan, is in Madrid doing library research for his thesis, so 'Im a lone lorn critter as Mrs. Gummidge would say.

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Tomorrow, the Feast of Corpus Christi, there is a big annual event in the parish here, namely the Solemn Communion of the children. It corresponds somewhat to our first Holy Communion, except that it is not the first for these kids, and that it is carried out in a bit grander style. All the little girls wear long white formal dresses, and the boys dress coats, etc. Invitations are sent out by the families to their friends something like on the occasion of an ordination, and a big party at the home follows the Mass and dinner afterwards. It is quite an all-out affair, with both good and bad points to it. Having a long tradition behind it, the curé doesn't want to let it drop as some parishes have already. One of the sad parts about it is that for a surprising number of the young folk engaged in it, it is the last time they come into the church perhaps, except for their marriage, and then again for their funeral.

Closing remarks.

* * *

36, rue Guilleminot, Paris 14
June 23, 1954.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

Sorry to send this short letter but once again things are sort of pressing in. This morning brought me the good news that I was successful in the written exams. How can I thank you for the help of your prayers? But you must keep them up for a while yet. The oral exams are coming up this Saturday, three in the morning and one in the afternoon. In

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the meantime I am feverishly cramming in bits of information that I hope will come out in some acceptable order when once before the board.

Father Terence McLaughlin is here at present. He takes the boat to Canada Saturday from Le Havre. He has to be on hand in Toronto for the General Chapter that begins July 5. I wonder who our new Superior General will be. I am betting on Father George Flahiff, but there are other possibilities. The outcome of the Annonay question will also be interesting. From extant rumors it looks like the reunion will be made.

Closing remarks.

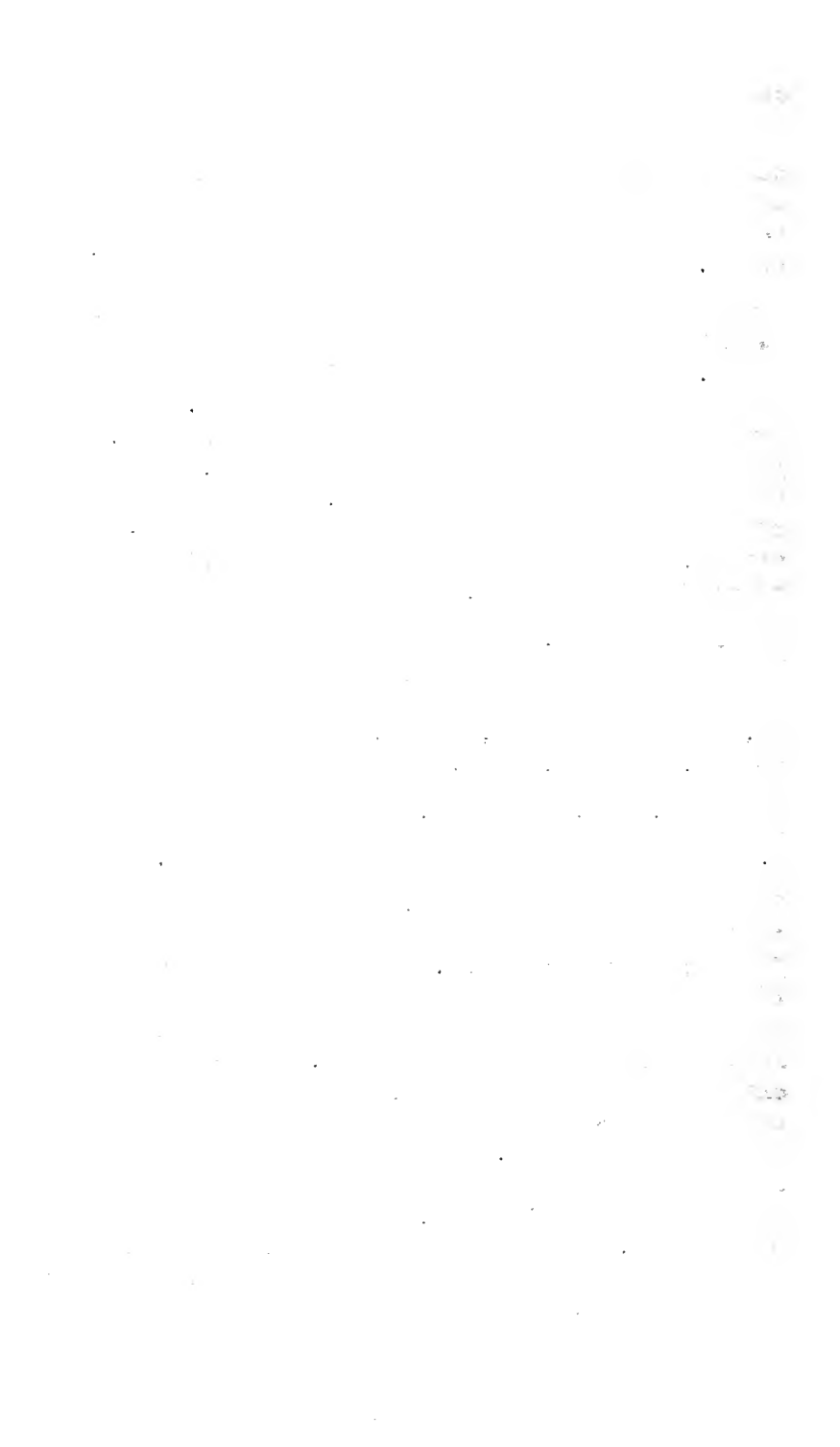
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36, rue Guilleminot, Paris,
Monday, June 28, 1954.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

1. Acknowledges letters with family news.

Saturday was quite a day. I got off to an early start with two orals in linguistics from 9:00 to 10:00 a.m. They were the two I was most afraid of and actually I think they went off not too badly. (We will not know until tonight or tomorrow.) The third exam was scheduled to follow right after but there were so many candidates I had to wait in line until noon. Standing there in that rickety old hall waiting tensely for two hours must approach, I'm sure, the Communist methods of torture. Finally my turn came, however, and the ordeal, "explication de texte", was fairly simple. I went home a half hour later



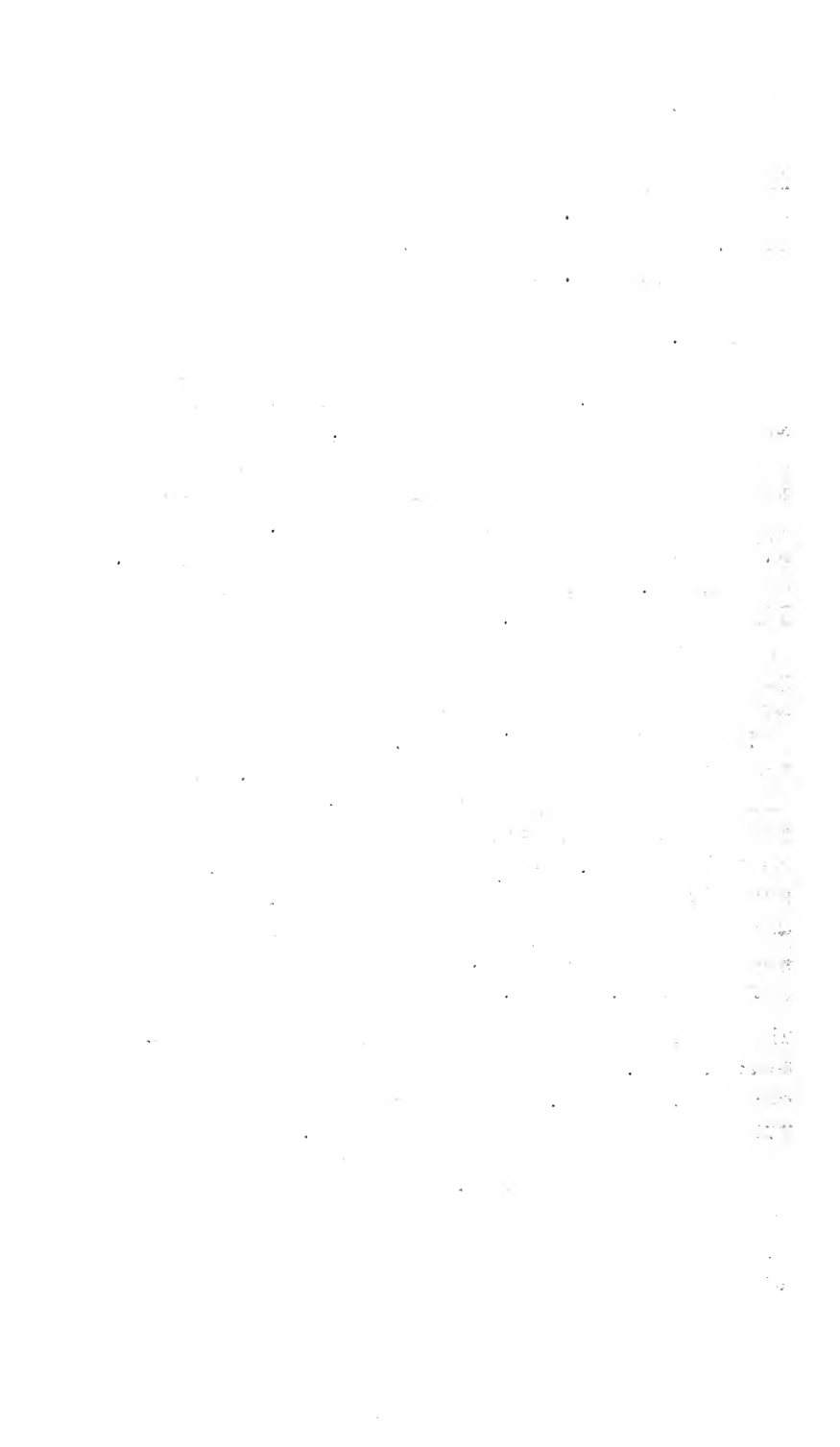
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in high spirits figuring I had made the grade on those three. The spirits took a nose-dive, however, when I came in for the last oral at 3:00 p.m. and was faced with a literature question about which I knew next to nothing. For fifteen minutes I had to talk about a topic that I could have dismissed in a few seconds. It was in English, fortunately, and I had the advantage there, but the prof put a couple of questions to me at the end that revealed in short order just to what extent I was talking through my hat, and after dismissing me with a cold "je vous remercie, monsieur", I slunk from the examination room like a slapped pup. I wended my way home on the bike slowly winding here and there in great dejection feeling like I had dropped over the edge of the globe. So how it will all turn out I don't know. The results may appear tonight or tomorrow sometime. If my mark was fairly good on the written exams it might pull me up from the depths of that horrible oral. It remains to be seen. In any case it is a relief to have it all over. The books are on the shelves and all the notes stacked away already, where they will stay for a while, I hope.

Thanks very much for the ancestral information, Mom. I hope to leave Paris this coming Saturday. Will give you a couple of new addresses in my next letter.

* * *



June 29, 1954

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36, rue Guilleminot, Paris(14)

June 29, 1954

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

I wouldn't let this day go by without sending you word that the exams turned out alright. I was over to the Sorbonne about an hour ago when they posted the results and happily saw my name among those "admis définitivement". What a relief. And now let me thank you all for your prayers that you have been saying faithfully for sometime now. I want to thank especially the children whom I asked to pray in particular . Until I get around to writing the different families may I ask you to pass on my thanks to them, Mom?

It's just 6:00 p.m. here now which means it is about noon in Toronto and that we have fifteen nw priests among the Basilians. I'm sure you will join your prayers with mine that they may be all they should be in the service of Christ's priesthood, and may that go for all who have been ordained on the feast of Sts. Peter and Paul.

This Saturday morning, July 3, I am leaving Paris by train for Normandy, taking my bike along. I hope to tour that region a bit, making my way to either Le Havre or St. Malo, where I shall load the bike on a boat for Southampton. Once in England I intend to work my way up to Liverpool, biking if the weather pemrits, taking a series of trains and buses if not. July 15 should be the date of entry into the Emerald Isle at Dublin. I hope to spend a month touring Ireland, but may have to cut it a bit short, depending on

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a number of things. But from July 3 to August 15 you can use the following address: 10, Balally Drive, Dundrum, County Dublin, Ireland, c/o Mr. Frank McGoldrick. He is the chap I met on the way over last Fall and has kindly invited me to stay with him for a few days, both on arriving in Ireland and before leaving. So any letters you might not have sent by the time I arrive at his place will be there by the time I leave. From August 15 I hope to go to Scotland and then down through England to London where I am going to help out in a parish for a month. So from August 15 to September 24 you can use the following address: 279 High Road, East Finchley, London, N2, England. If it should happen that I have to change those plans I'll let you know by letter from somewhere along the way.

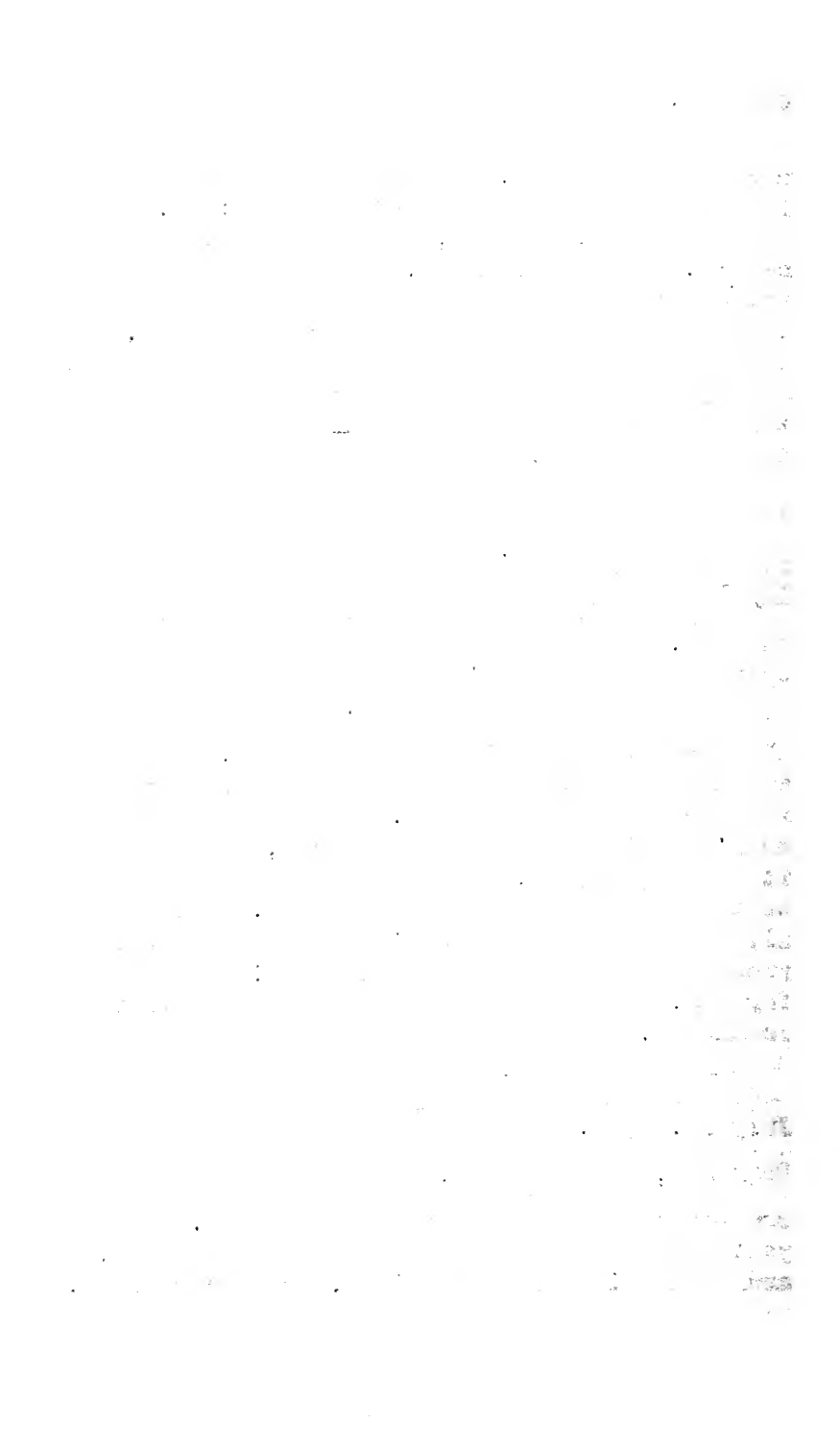
The Chapter begins in Toronto July 5, so no appointments will be official until it has finished its last session. Something tells me I'll not be in Paris next year, but so far it is only rumour. Like the soldiers we have to be ready for a move at any time. After all this travelling I don't think moving will present much of a problem any more! Goodbye for now. Hope to hear from you when I arrive in Dublin.

* * *

July 17, 1954.

Dear Mom, Dad and Kink,

Greetings from Dublin and from Ireland. Arrived yesterday morning on the boat from Liverpool, and am staying with my friend, Fram McGoldrick.



August 12, 1954

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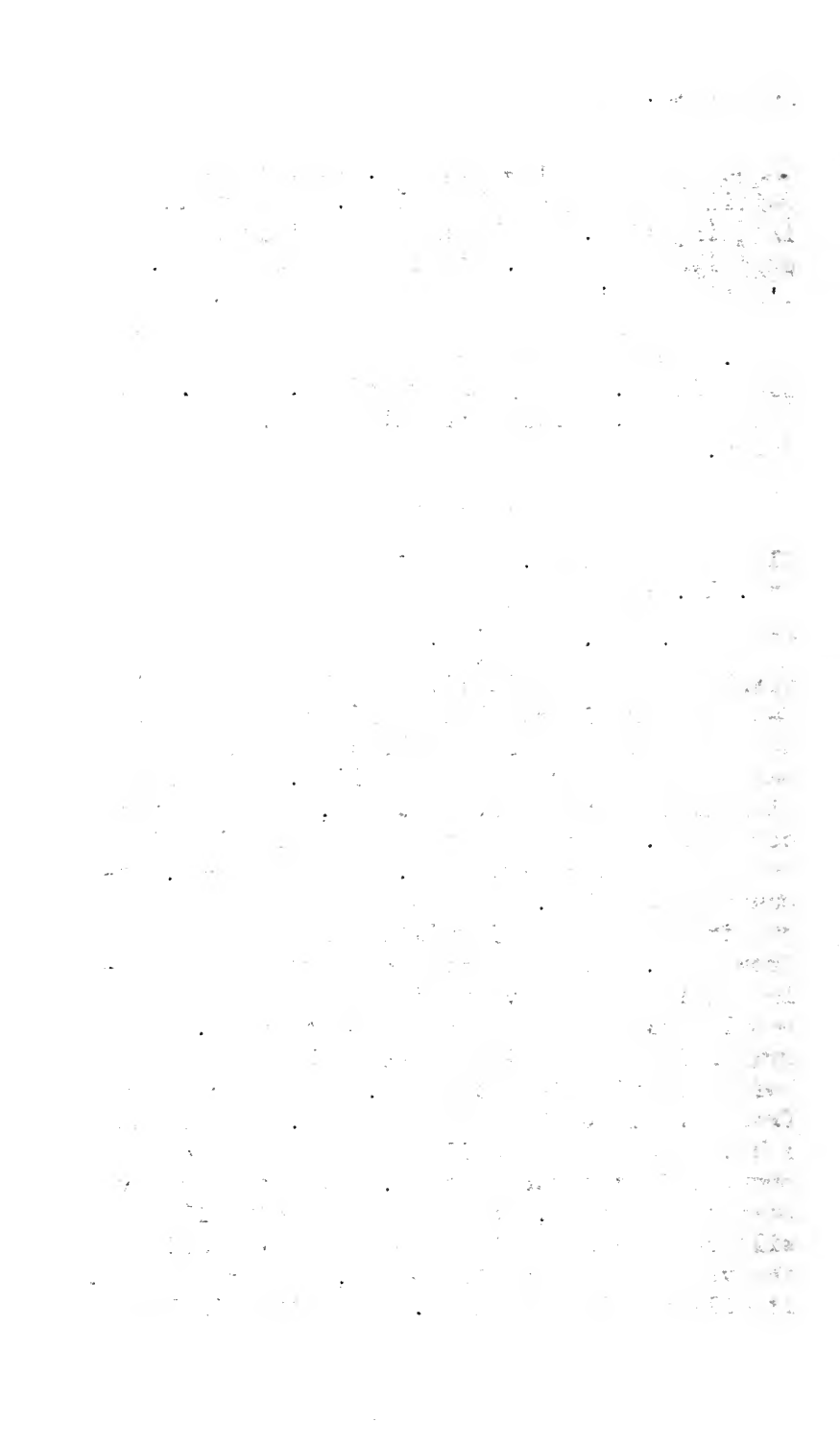
Thanks for your last letter, Mom; it was waiting for me when I arrived. Everything is going fine. Am having a magnificent tour; experiences galore. Ireland is wonderful. I'm afraid I'll be spoiled altogether, for they treat a priest like we do a bishop at home. Tomorrow we are taking a drive out to Glendalough, the monastery of St. Kevin. My best to all. Will write at greater length later.

* * *

Clonard Monastery, Belfast
Aug. 12, 1954

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

Thanks to the hospitality of the Redemptorist Fathers here I have been able to make a three day visit in Belfast and hence have found a base and time to send you a line. The last airmail letter was from Dublin, if I remember correctly. Much has happened since then in the way of places visited, miles covered, acquaintances made. Sad to say this is my last day in Ireland for I sail to Glasgow tonight from here, but the memory of a most interesting tour and of a very kind and understanding people will last for some time to come. Originally I had planned to go back to Dublin before leaving for Scotland, but the crossing from here is shorter and handier. As you know I have received no mail from anywhere for about the past three weeks, being on the move most of the time, so news of how you all are will come as a great welcome when I shall arrive in London on August 23, and please God, it will be all good news. Here then in brief



is what the wandering minstrel boy has been doing since the last word you received. If you have a map of Ireland handy it might be easier to follow and give you a better idea of the route covered.

From Dublin I took the bus to Cork, an eight hour ride that would have been very tiring save for the interest aroused by the comical characters, men and women, who got on and off here and there all the way down. After a couple of days in Cork I went on to Bantry Bay and around to Glengariff (southwest side). From there I biked to Kenmare, and then to Killarney: that road is supposed to be the most beautiful in all Ireland. (Omission: while at Cork I took a bus out to Blarney Castle, about ten miles, and of course, kissed the Blarney stone). After a few days in Killarney, I went on to Limerick; then inland somewhat to Tipperary. From there I biked to the home of the Ryans near Rear Cross whose daughter is a nun in Paris in the parish where I stayed. Then I went on to Nenagh where the Whelans live and about whom I'll be telling you more later. From Nenagh I went farther east to Roscrea to see the famous Cistercian Abbey. Then I came back to Limerick, out to Shannon Airport, and on to Galway. During a two day visit there I was able to work in a tour of the west coast through the district of Connemara. From Galway I went to Our Lady's Shrine at Knock, a small place in County Mayo, north of Galway. The next stop was Bondoran, a small seaside town, still on the west coast, north of Sligo. From there the road lay through Donegal to Londonderry, or as the Irish insist, Derry. Before leaving there a

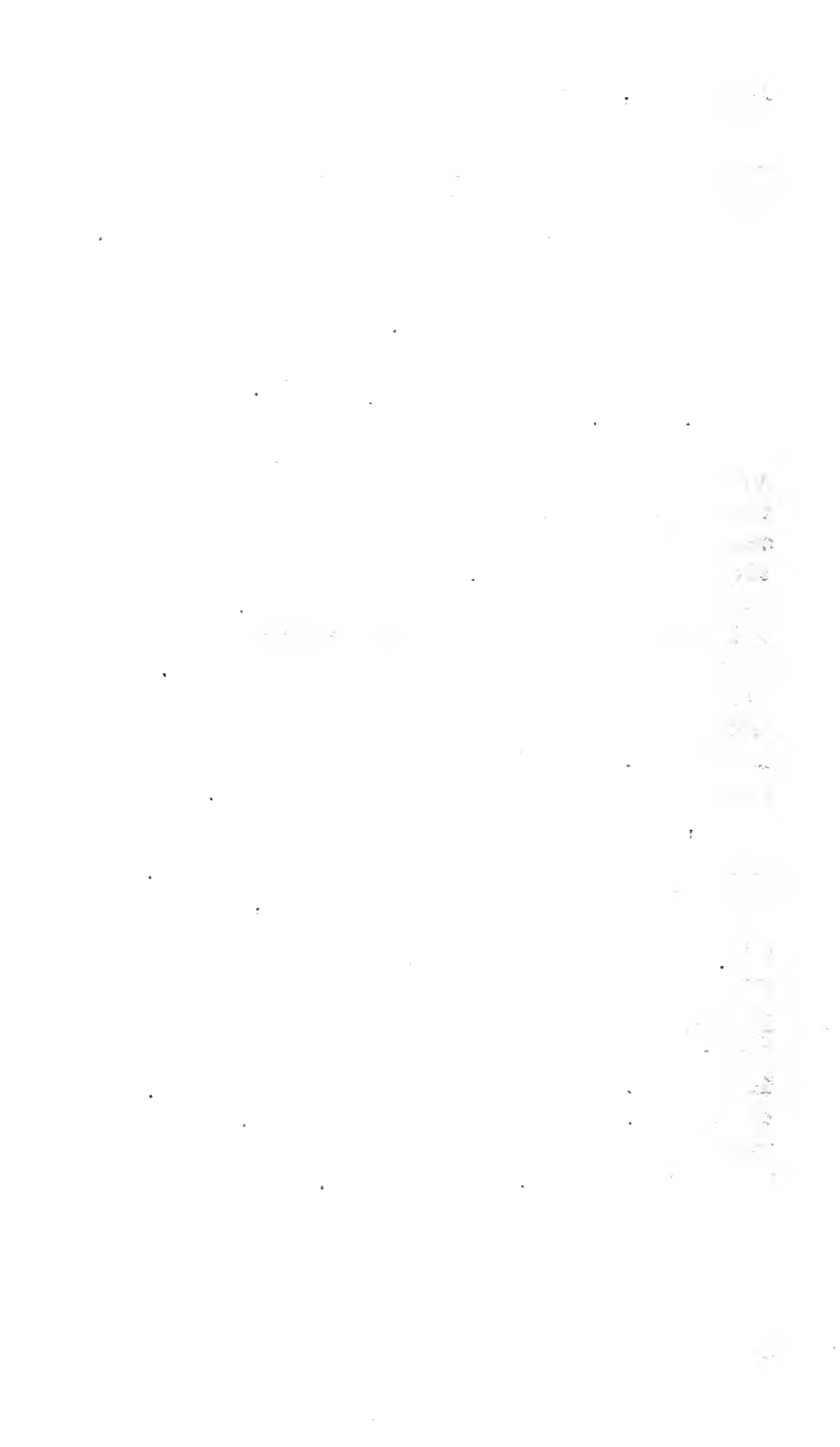
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couple of priest brought me out on a drive along the shore of Lough Foyle to Moville and Inishowen Head, at the tip of the peninsula. By train then I came to Belfast following the north shore a good part of the way and have been here now three days. During that time I took a run down to Carrickmacross and got a line on some families of Kerley's. The pastor there, Msgr. Finnegan, promised to do some inquiring about the family and let me know. In any case I have names and addresses of people for both Carrickmacross and Nenagh to whom we can write and perhaps establish some connections with the past. Unfortunately my information as to dates was rather vague. I rather think a letter either from you or Greg arrived after I left Paris and did not catch up. However the people I met seem very interested and anxious to know more about possible relatives in Canada, and I'm sure we can trace back the relatives to a certain extent any way.

Now I'll have to put away my shamrock and get out the Scotch tam for the next few days. The trip is wonderfully enjoyable, though it would be much more so were some of you along too. The bike is proving very handy for short runs and for getting about in the cities. I load it on top of a bus or in the baggage car of the train when it is a case of longer distances. The state of health is ideal, thank God, despite changes of food. Hope everyone at home is fine too. Will write you next from London, Deo volente.

* * *



August 24, 1954

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St. Mary's Rectory, E. Finchley
Tues. Aug. 24, 1954

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink.

1. Announces arrival in London with a brief description of traffic, etc.
2. Acknowledges 16 letters waiting his arrival. Family news. Comments on amount of rain during summer.

Among the correspondence was a letter from the Superior General, Father George Flahiff, appointing me for next year to graduate studies in the University of Lyons. Though he didn't give any details, I rather think it will mean taking lectures in Lyons and living at Annonay, in the house of the French Basilians, who, as you likely have heard, have been incorporated into the Community. I'm not too sure just how it will work out; Father Flahiff will probably write again making a few specifications; but one thing is pretty sure, I'll not be in Paris. Father Wally Platt has been given the same appointment, so two of us will be together. Since Annonay is over 100 miles from Lyons we will likely live part of the week in both places, which part being determined by the lectures schedule. But I'll be telling you more of it later.

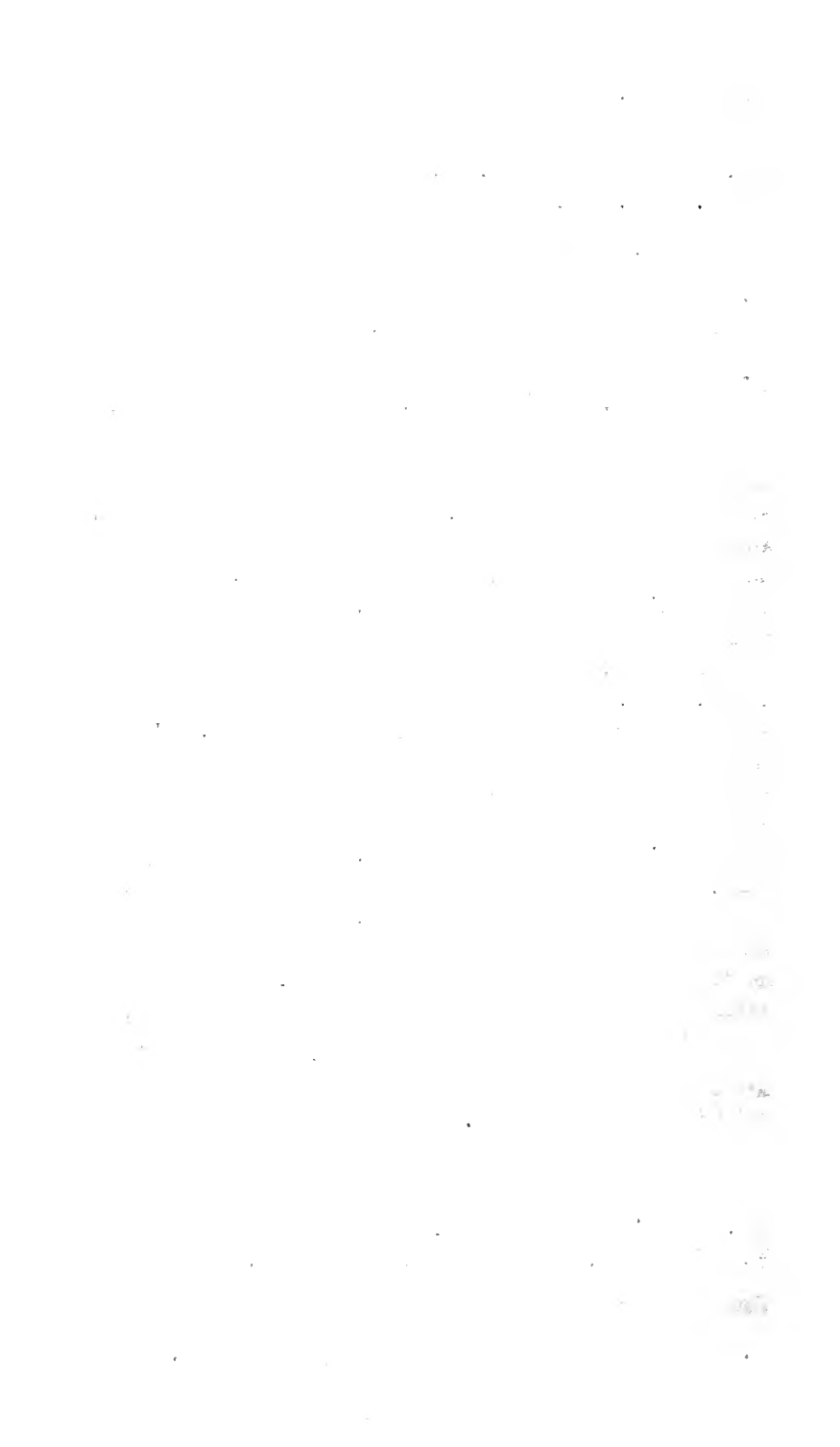
In closing promises snaps and some account of his holiday tour.

* * *

St. Mary's Presbytery, 279 High Road
E. Finchley, London, N2, Mon. Aug. 30/54

Dear Kink:

1. Thanks for letter and birthday gift.



I was wishing you could have been here last Wednesday morning. It was a beautiful warm day so I decided to go downtown and have a look at Buckingham Palace. It was just 11:00 a.m. as I arrived, in perfect time for the changing of the guard. What a thrilling sight that is! All the platoons (four or five of them) come on parade in front of the palace in their dress uniforms. They each wear a high black bearskin hat, brilliant red coat, blue trousers, ornaments galore, and a sword, rifle, or brass band instrument as the case may be. They do a slow march in perfect unison to appropriate band music, and then break into the quick march as they move out of the square in front of the palace through an immense iron gateway. In the bright sunshine it is a great, colourful sight, and done, of course, to perfection. It takes about half an hour for them to go through all their formations before the new guard is in place and the old one on the way out. Apparently it is one of the things to see here for there were at least 5,000 people watching. No doubt most of them were tourists, for one old fellow, obviously a Londoner, told me that in the middle of January there are about ten onlookers at the most.

Thursday I paid a visit to Westminster Abbey, originally Catholic but lost during the Reformation. It was built in the 12th century, I believe, by French monks, and shows a strong resemblance to some of the churches I have seen in France. It is frightfully cluttered up now, though, with monuments, busts and plaques in honor of every Tom, Dick and Harry since the Reformation. If they would clear

September 3, 1954

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them all out it would be once again a beautiful building though not as beautiful as it would be if Mass could be offered in it once more. That is the sad thing about most of these old English churches; they were built by Catholics, the prime purpose being a fitting dwelling where Mass could be said and attended, and then they were taken over by the Protestants with the result that they have become mere empty buildings.

Closing remarks.

* * *

Friday, September 3, 1954

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink.

1. Observations on weather and crops in England.
Inquiries about same in Canada.

I would like to send in this letter the information I found on the Kirleys in Ireland. While in Dublin I consulted the arms heraldic museum at the Castle and found out the name in Irish means "shaped like the god Thor, the Scandinavian Jupiter", whatever that is, I don't know. There are several variations in spelling all coming from the one Gaelic name: McHurryly, McCuryle, McKyrrelly, MacCorley, MacKerley, MacKerlie, MacGirley, Corley, Curley, Kerley, Kerly, Kirley. There is a coat of arms for the name Curley, and undoubtedly it is ours, but the artist in charge of making reproductions would not make them for me with the name Kirley on it for he claimed there might be no connection between the families. Since he wanted a dreadful price for every hours work I told him I might come back another day. That was all I did in Dublin.

September 3, 1954

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When I reached Carrickmacross, about a month later, I found there are people living in the country, a few miles from the town, with the name Kirley, but I didn't get meeting any of them. A shopkeeper who knew the family was able to give me some addresses that might be useful in establishing contacts. The first is Mr. Peter Kirley (KERLEY), whose address is Clonseady, Maheracloone Kingscourt, County Cavan, Ireland. He is an old man but very keen and apparently with a good memory. Two other people that might have records of the family are 1) Fr. McConnor, Killanny, Corcreighy, Dundalk, County Louth. 2) Fr. Boylan, Upper Parish, Rock Chapel, Carrickmacross. I met neither of these; the shopkeeper gave me their anmes. I did meet the pastor at Carrickmacross though, and had tea with him. He is Msgr. Hugh Finnegan, St. Joseph's Church, Carrickmacross, County Monaghan, Ireland. His parish records only go back to about 1850, but he said he would be glad to inquire in some of the neighboring parishes. I was unable to give him very definite information either as to names or dates, but I thought you folks might have some clues that would help. If you could write any of these people I've mentioned telling them the case I'm sure they will do what they can to re-establish connections withe past. It seems like old Peter might be the family, but it is hard to be sure. Don't be afraid to write them anyway and see what can be learned. Next letter I'll tell you what I found at Nenagh in the Whelan connection. I have some interesting pictures from there that I shall mail soon. My best to all.

September 9, 1954

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St. Mary's Rectory

Thursday, September 9, 1954.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink.

1. Thanks for recent letters.

London seems like a very fine city, at least what I've seen of it so far. It's so big and so spread out that getting to see it all is a real problem. The underground line that I take to go downtown is 20 miles long and is under the city all the way. The busy section such as the Strand, Leicester Square, Piccadilly are frightfully crowded most of the time. But happily enough there are many good-sized parks to which one can easily escape for a bit of peace and quiet. The traffic is heavy alright, but more orderly and considerate both of pedestrians and of each other than in Paris. Last week I paid a visit to Canada House, looked about, signed the visitor's book, etc. and the next day received the Canadian newspaper that they publish "Canada Weekly Review" which carried an article on Joe Tangney of Lindsay catch-in 20 some lb. muskie and landing it in about half an hour. It made me think I was back at home reading the Lindsay Post.

Has not seen the Queen. Talks about a Father Casey who met her at a wedding reception.

The parish work is going fine and I find it very enjoyable. One of the big items in connection with this parish is the cemetery across the road. We have to handle the burial ceremony of all the Catholics that come into it. Some days there are none, but today there were three, and sometimes more. So we are

September 18, 1954

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frequently reminded of death and the transitoriness of this life. Usually the mourners are quite calm and well behaved, but yesterday they did everything but climb into the grave. Two or three of the ladies were moaning so loudly I couldn't hear myself read the prayers. It was a very sad case though, a girl twenty-four years old who had died from tuberculosis. People have their troubles to be sure.

Closing remarks.

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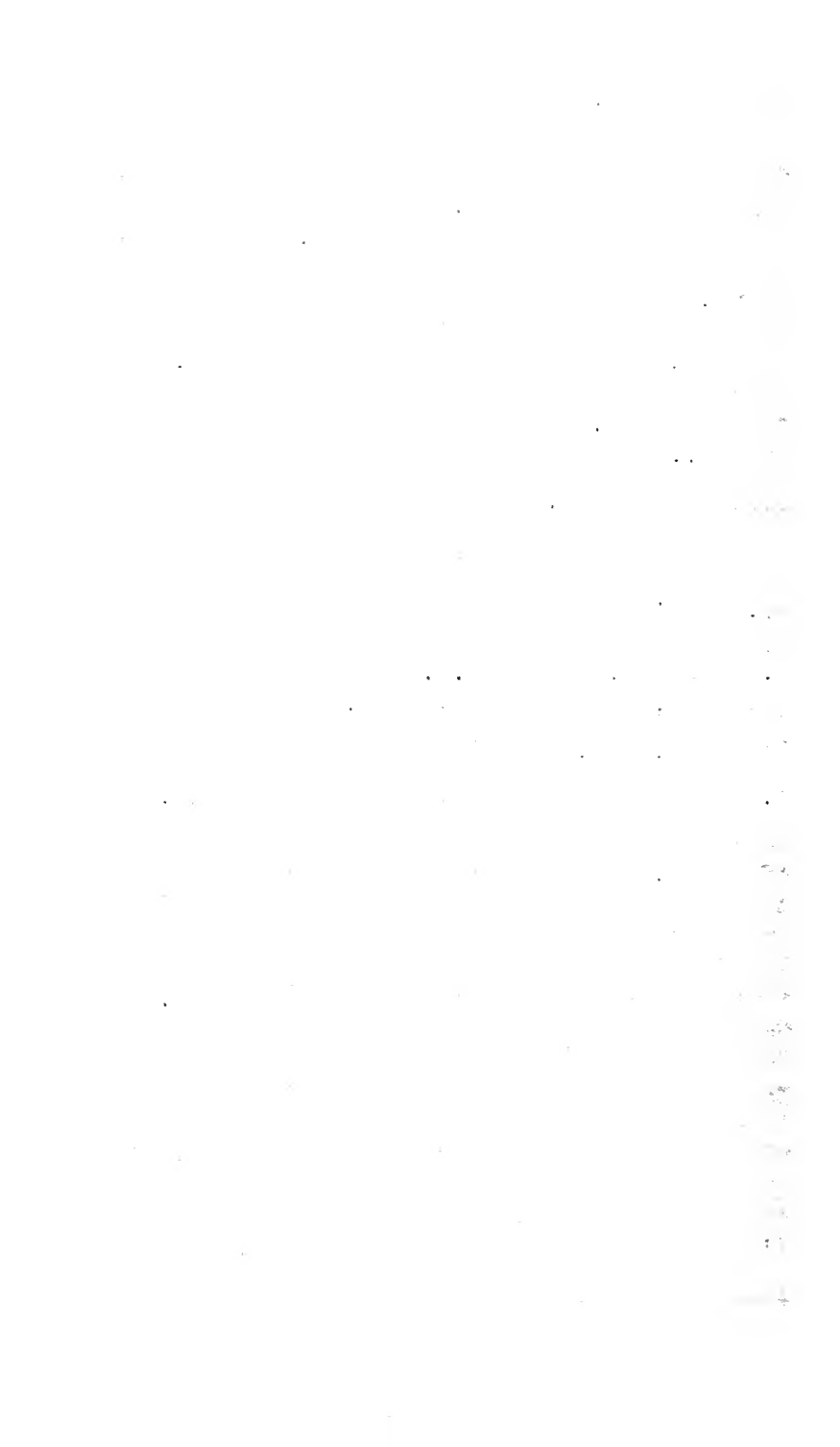
St. Mary's Rectory
279 High Road
E. Finchley, London N.2.
Saturday, September 18, 1954.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

1. Exchange of letters. Sends shapshots.

You asked about the move to the Univsersity of Lyons. It is a bit of a diplomatic chore to get on the ins with a whole new set of professors in just one year, but once done I think it should be advantageous to have friends and acquaintances in both places. Certainly the time we are to spend with the Basilians at Annonay will be far more pleasant than the community with whom we lived during the past year, and better from the point of view of learning conversational French. I'm quite happy in fact for that reason about the change of address. It will all work out well I'm sure andis certainly God's will.

Your mention of a wool sweater sounds good; it



would be welcome this coming winter for the altitude where I'll be is much above that of Paris. If you could find one like Anne gave me before leaving it would be grand. I've worn hers everyday since leaving Canada, including the whole summer, time out for a wash now and then, but it's starting to weaken a bit now. You could send it to me at. Maison St-Joseph, Route de la Caligornie, Annonay (Ardèche), France. I won't be there until October 11 but that's o.k. My sincere thanks in advance.

Now for a bit of information on Nenagh, and the Whelans. I found there an elderly man, James Whelan, who remembered hearing about relatives in Canada but he did not know just where they were. I told him my grandmother was a Whelan who married a McGeough. Is that right? It seems to me I recall someone years ago, was it a Mr. Fleury, talking about the Whelan fortune and it seemed to have involved you, Mom, from which I supposed your mother was a Whelan. In any case I took it for granted your side descended from Whelans to make the hunt more interesting. He is 83 years old and an extremely fine old gentleman, clear as a bell and fairly active. His wife is also living but very weak and confined to bed. They have a candy shop in Nenagh where there are three daughters, Agnes, Julia and Peg. There is a fourth one, Nacny, whom I did not meet. Mr Whelan's father was Darius Whelan (pronounced "da-rice") who died I forget when for I have misplaced the paper on which I wrote that down. Darius' father was Edward Whelan who died November 16, 1838, and whose tombstone we found in the neaby cemetery. I have the inscription on the stone written

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down here: it goes "Erected by Darius Whelan of Nenagh in memory of his father Edward Whelan who died Nov. 16, 1838, aged 65 years, and his brothers James and John Whelan, and infant child, Jeremiah, who died Nov. 20, 1861, eight days old. Also in memory of Elizabeth Whelan, alias Gill, who departed this life June 13, 1863, aged 33 years". Mr. Whelan thinks it was that James who went to Canada, but he is not sure. We went over some of the parish registers, but they only go back to 1792, so old Edward's birth and baptism would not be there. However, the sacristan at St. Mary's, Nenagh, is very willing to go through either Baptism or Marriage books if you can give him an approximation on the date. He is Mr. Patrick O'Brien, Sacristan, St. Mary's Catholic Church, Nenagh, County Tipperary, Ireland. And if you write to the Whelans themselves, write to Miss Agnes Whelan, Kickham Street, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary. She is very anxious to hear from you. Hope it is the right family. Goodbye for now.

* * *

36 rue Guilleminot, Paris 14e
3 octobre, 1954.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

1. Exchange of letters. Acknowledges receipt of parcel and two Masses.

Tonight I begin a retreat with the Jesuit Fathers in their house on the outskirts of Paris, and will finish it Friday morning, October 8th. Next weekend will be pretty well taken up packing trunk, bags, books, etc. and

October 30, 1954

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transporting them to the train for Annonay. Don't be surprised, therefore, if you go a-while without any word. We expect to settle down in Annonay October 12.

This year will be quite different from last in that we (Father Wally Platt and I) will be living in two places - part of each week in Annonay with the Basilians and part in Lyon taking classes. We will stay in a "foyer sacerdotal", a guest house for priests while in Lyon. The trip to and fro will be about 100 kilometres and will likely be made on the bus. I hoped the Community might possibly give us permission to buy a secondhand car, but it looks like that was hoping for too much. In any case it will be interesting and I think much superior in almost every way to the past year in Paris.

Closing remarks.

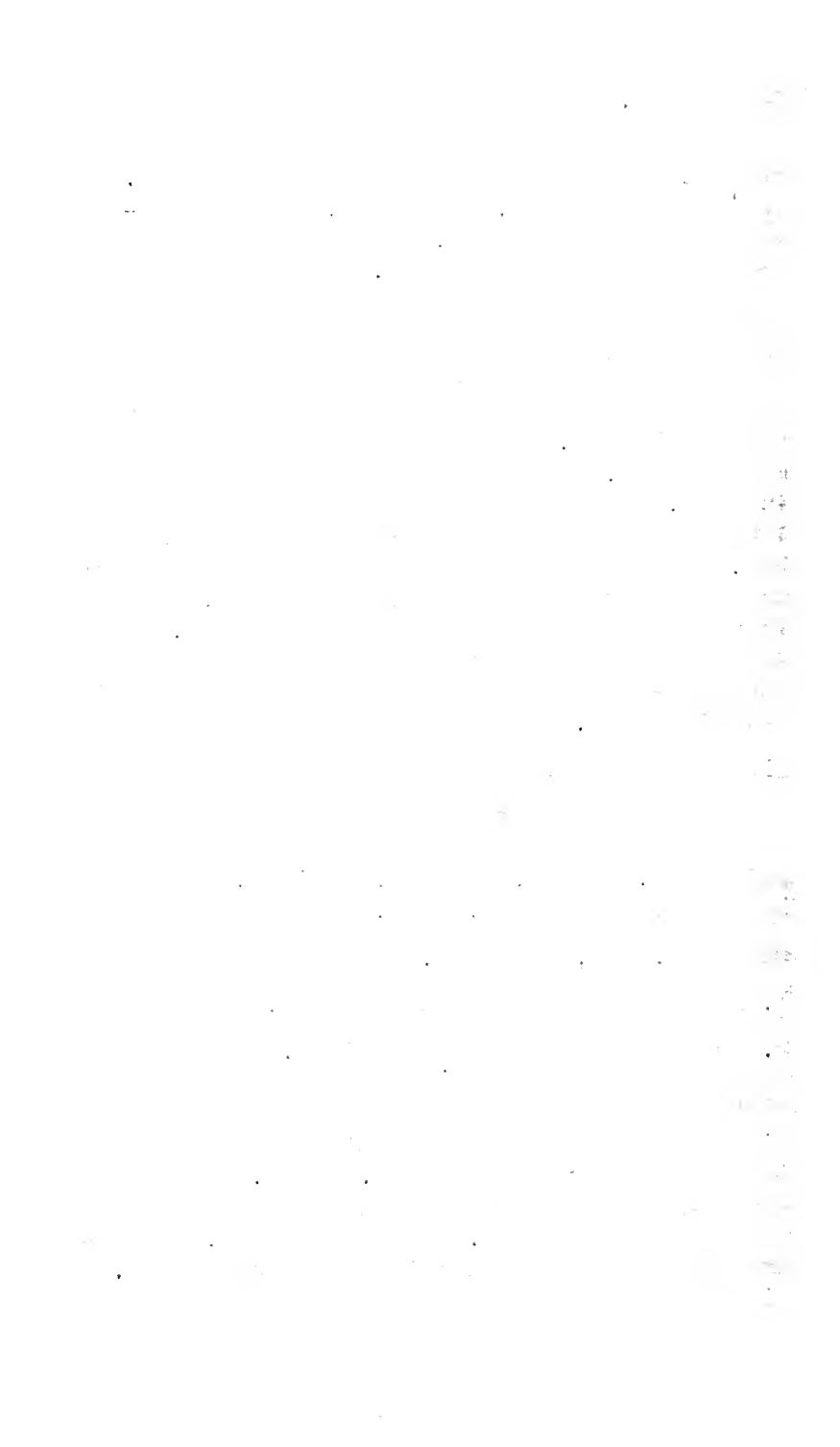
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Maison St.-Joseph, Annonay, Ardèche.
Saturday, October 30, 1954.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

1. Remarks on exchange of letters.
2. Weather is perfectly fabulous.

This afternoon we are going down about 80 miles south to the Basilians' holiday house in the little village of St. Alban. Father Dick Donovan and I visited the French confreres there last Christmas, if you remember, but today will be Father Platt's first look at it. Since All Saints and All Souls are holidays



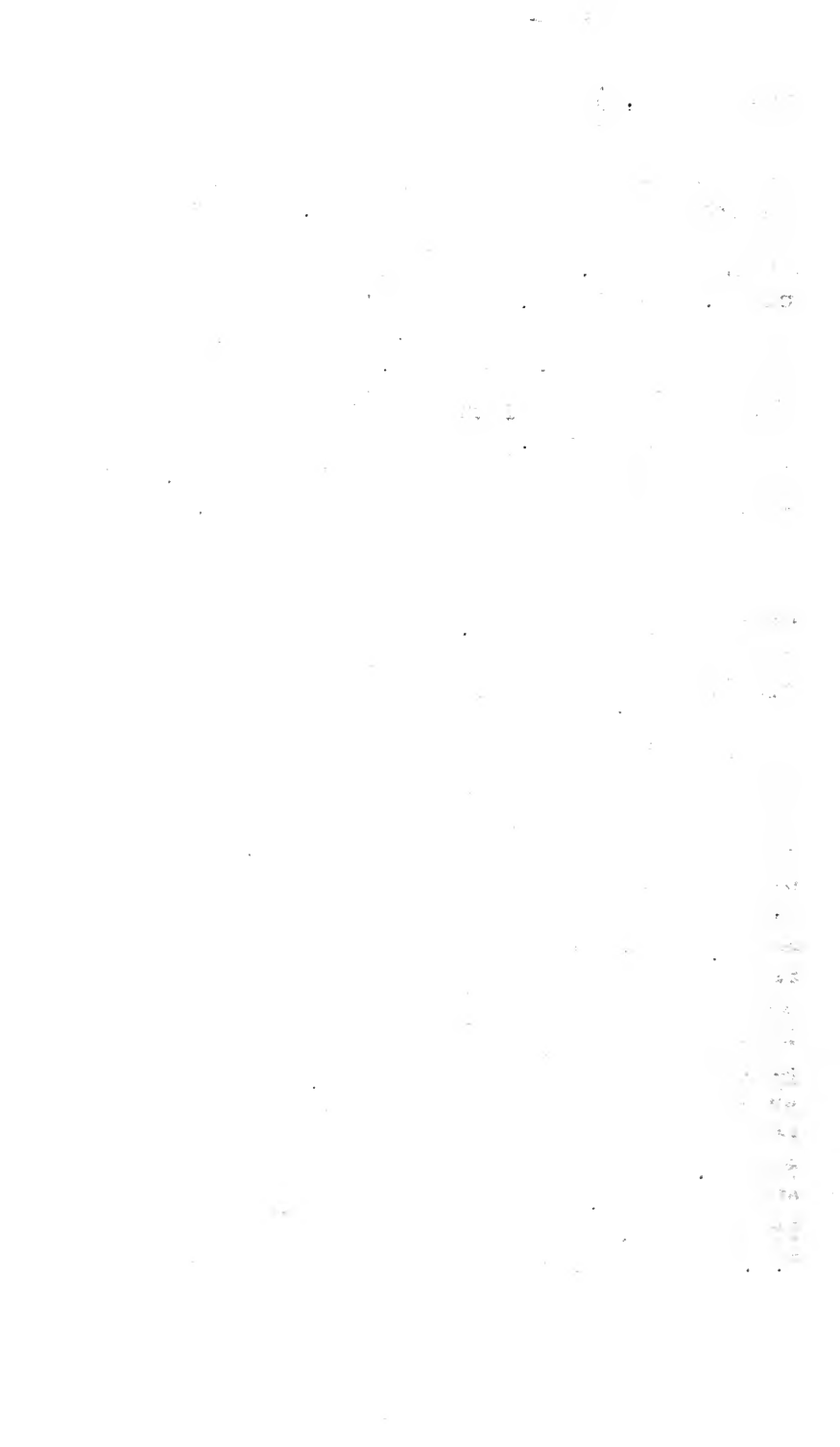
October 30, 1954

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here for the kids the trip down is worth while; we will come back Tuesday night. The following day we shall be off to Lyons to register and begin classes. It seems late to be starting class, doesn't it, but that's the way with these French Universities, noting doing before the first week in November.

While waiting for lectures I've been getting some reading done, and also have been writing a little account of the summer's travels. It's taking a little longer than I expected, for I have already devoted a week to it and have only done the part in between Paris and Ireland. The latter part may have to be cut short somewhat for lack of time, but I hope to get it off to you before Christmas. It's not all inclusive by any means, for one would have to experience it all to witness all the details, but it will give you a general idea of what happened here and there and I would ask you to keep it as I might wish some day to go over it and recall some of the incidents.

How did the opening of Carr Hall come off? I'm glad some of you were able to be present at it. I haven't seen any pictures of it since it has been completed, so the account in the paper will be welcome. The foundation was all laid when I left, in fact I think all the reinforced concrete work was done. From some of the comments of the confreres in Toronto it reminds one from outside of a mediaeval castle, but apparently the inside is almost the last word. Father Henry Carr, after whom it is named, was Superior General before Father E.J. McCorkell, and is at present teaching in



November 13, 1954

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the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, hoping eventually to set up there a college affiliated with the state university much the same as the set-up at St. Michael's in the University of Toronto. I have seen him a few times, though never talked with him that I can recall, nor ever had him for a teacher. He's quite a remarkable man, though, seemingly; Father J.V. McAuley could tell you lots about him, more in fact than I could.

Family news and closing remarks.

* * *

Maison St. Joseph, Annonay, Ardèche,
November 13, 1954.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

1. Opening remarks.

Our classes got underway definitively this week. Father Wally Platt and I took off on the bus early Tuesday morning (6:30 a.m.) and arrived in Lyons at 8:45, just nice time to get to a nine o'clock class. In order to get Mass and breakfast in before starting out we had to rise at five, and since we are still on dalylight saving time over here, it seemed like the middle of the night. There wasn't much sign of life as we made our way down through the narrow streets of Annonay, but the bus was well loaded before our departure. We watched the dawn slowly break as we wound our way down through the hills of Ardèche to the valley of the Rhône. When it got light enough we got out our vocabulary books and started to learn new words in connection with this

year's courses. It's impossible to read at any length of time on the bus for it jumps around too much, so we resort to a type of study that doesn't require too much ocular concentration.

The Foyer where we stay in Lyons is quite a fine place. The company there is good and more important, the meals are excellent. Our rooms are on the 4th floor, which over here is the 5th, so once having climbed up one needs a good reason before going out again. The building is not exactly modern but the rooms are quite comfortable and not too expensive, 800 francs a day, about \$2.10, which includes everything. For the service we get there I think it is quite a bargain. As the name "foyer" suggests it is a sort of home for priests who are just travelling through. All sorts of interesting cases come along, each with views and ideas from different parts of France. This past week there was a curé from Corsica staying there who had many a delightful anecdote to tell us about life and people from his parish up in the mountains. We are very lucky, really, to have such an advantageous position. I think by the end of the year we will know quite a bit more about the French clergy that we do now. Of course, priests from other countries stop in too, for Lyons is on the main line from Paris down to the south, so that anyone going from the north to either Italy or Spain, or other points south is more than likely to pass by, and vice versa.

Remarks on weather.

Closing remarks.

November 28, 1954

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Maison St. Joseph, Annonay, Ardèche,
Monday, November 28, 1954.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

1. Opening remarks and observations on weather.
2. Acknowledges receipt of parcel and complains of paying more duty in Annonay than in Paris.
3. Attended a movie, "L'Homme Tranquille", (The Quiet Man). remarks on it.

I see by the papers that you gave Mendeès-France a great welcome over there; he must have been impressed. They don't know what to make of him over here. They have to admit that he has done wonders in the international world so far, but his ancestry makes the Catholics dubious. His recent decrees on curtailing the consumption of alcoholic drinks in France may make him pretty unpopular however; the French don't like to be curtailed in any way, least of all in that particular one. They're corks to drink, as all the world knows. It remains to be seen how long he will last; I don't envy him his position.

Closing remarks.

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Maison St. Joseph, Annonay, Ardèche.
Monday, December 6, 1954.

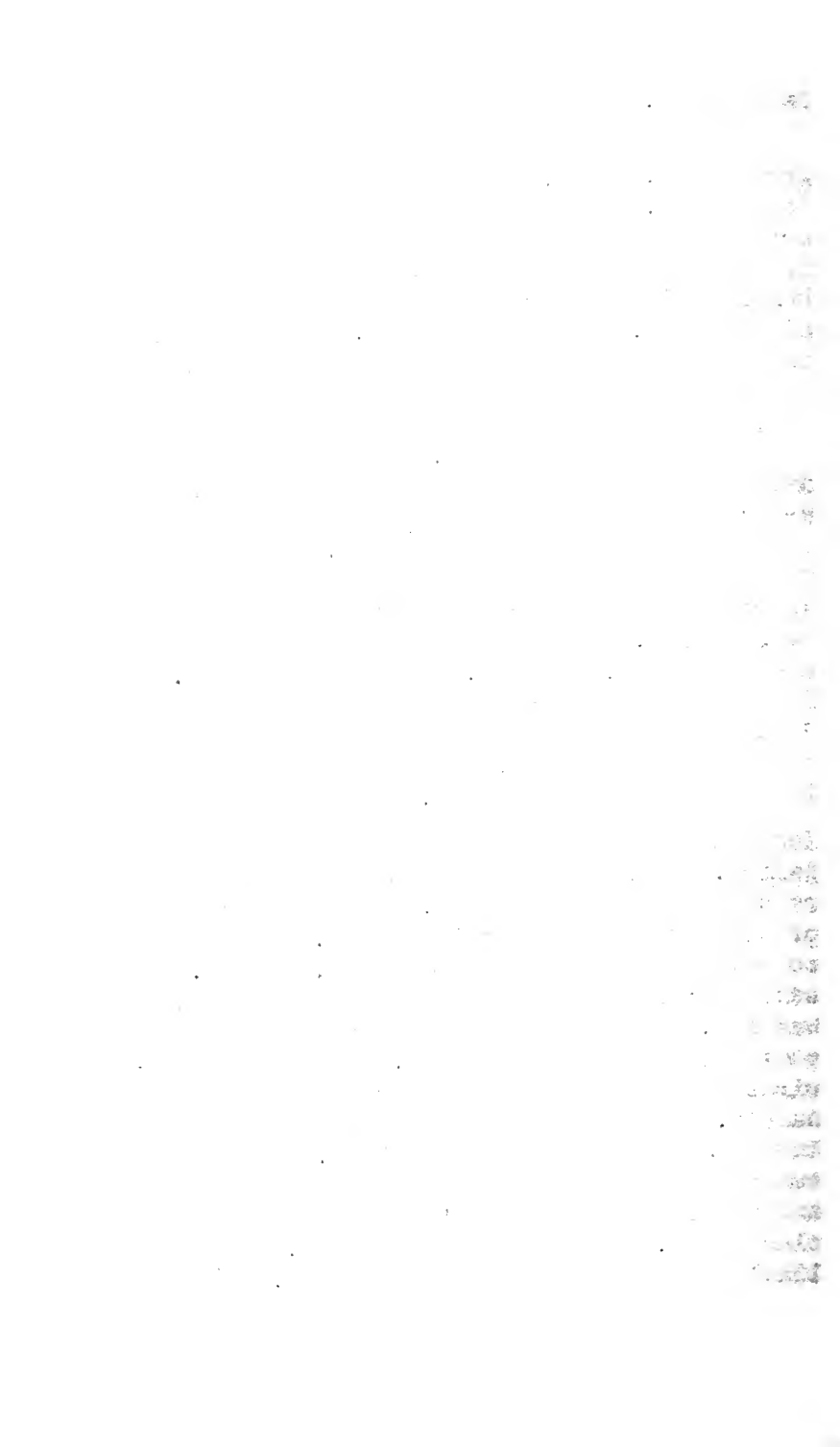
Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

1. Acknowledges letter with Mass stipends.
2. Snow in Lyons.

Father Wally Platt and I are sort of anxious to see what happens in Lyons next Wednesday,

December 8, for the feast of the Immaculate Conception. During the past few weeks or more the public works committee have been putting up strings of electric lights and bunting all over the main streets in honour of Our Lady. Lyons is the No. 1 Marian city in France, apart from Lourdes, of course, by reason of very old devotion to the Mother of God, and each year it goes all out to celebrate the 8th of December. Oddly enough the day is not a holy day of obligation; there are only four throughout the whole year now in France since Napoleon's time. But it is a big feast nevertheless; the stores play it up too by way of advertisements and special merchandise, some of them a bit fantastic such as cakes, candies, bars of soap, etc. in the shape of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception! But we saw the same sort of thing at Lourdes last year, so I guess that sort of thing is not too uncommon.

Today I have another encounter with the French police. There has been some difficulty in renewing my identity card, mainly by reason of the fact that I let it expire. We hope to get it regulated this morning, though. I went down last Monday but the chief was away hunting, so nothing could be done until he came back from his holidays. Besides the expiration I have a second charge against me, namely, omission to let the police in Paris know I was changing my residence. That is supposed to be done apparently before leaving, and a declaration of one's arrival in the new place made, neither of which I did. So we'll likely have some "explaining" to do. The whole



December 13, 1954

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affair is quite amusing, really, for it is only a formality, but the police consider it a very serious business, and get quite worked up when one is not just according to the rules. Don't be surprised therefore if the next letter is from the local jail!

Closing remarks.

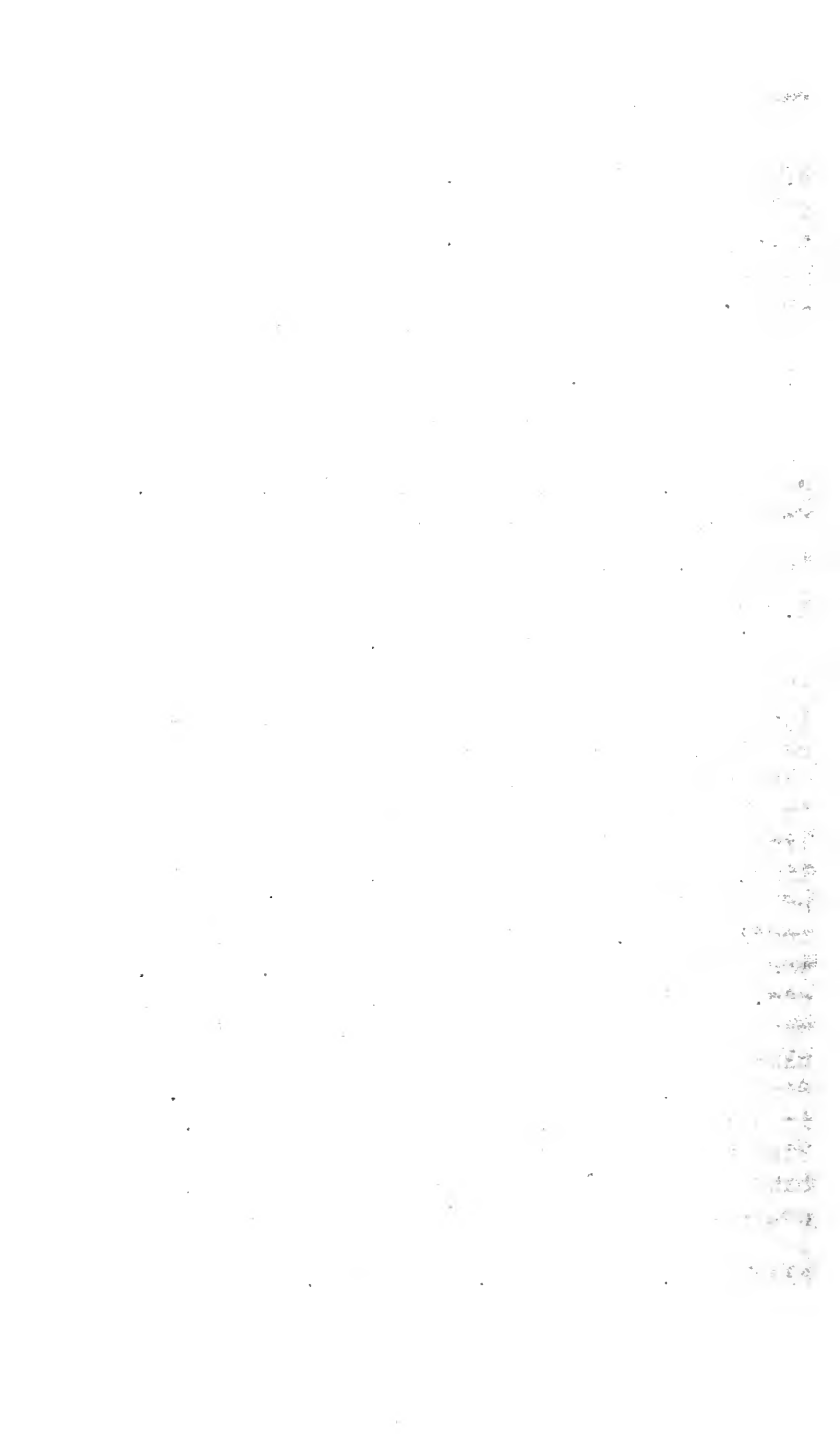
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Maison St. Joseph, Annonay, Ardèche, France.
Monday, December 13, 1954.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

1. Exchange of letters. Acknowledges parcel with Christmas cake in it.

This week we were lucky to be in the city of Lyons for the feast of the Immaculate Conception, for we witnessed a custom that is unique in the world. Around seven o'clock in the morning all the houses and apartments lined their window sills with little vigil lights in honour of Our Lady. In the dark of the night this made a very pretty and poetic sight. In addition the main streets were brilliantly lighted with stars, crowns, etc. in electric light bulbs. Every Lyonnais was out in the streets walking, or trying to, plus a good few thousand from the surrounding districts, even from as far away as Paris. It is quite an event, and well worth seeing. High up on the hill that forms the western bank of the Saône River the big Basilica, Notre Dame de la Fourvière was flood-lit so that it stood out magnificently against the black sky. Of course, to some extent it was



December 20, 1954

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commercialized, but in general I think Our Lady got the most of the attention.

Am gradually getting straight with the police. Looks like I wont have to spend Christmas in the jug after all. Goodbye for now.

* * *

Maison St. Joseph, Annonay, Ardèche,
Monday, December 20, 1954.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

1. Opening remarks.

2. Observations on "Bring Christ back to Christmas" movement in Toronto.

Our classes go on until Thursday night at the University; the shcool here gets out Tuesday night. This past while the kids have been writing exams and the teachers feverishly correcting them. On Wednesday of this week there is a big assembly during which the results are announced and prizes awarded. Unfortunately I'll not be there to see how it comes off, but no doubt we will hear about it upon returning Thursday night. Father William Young is coming down from Paris to spend Christmas with us; we are all going down to St. Alban Friday to stay there for w few days; and then on farther south for a little trip on the Cote d'Azur. We had thought of going through Switzerland but it looks now like that plan will not be realized.

Acknowledges receipt of letters.

Closes with Christmas greetings.

January 6, 1955

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Foyer Sacerdotal, Lyon
Epiphany, January 6, 1955.

Dear Pete, Mary, Francis and Sean.

A family letter with best wishes for the New Year and sympathy on the death of Aunt Kate.

* * *

Foyer Sacerdotal, 5 rue Henri IV, Lyon
Tuesday, January 25, 1955.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink.

Acknowledges letter with three Masses for Aunt Kate. Observations on weather in Lyon and floods with some account of damage. News of relatives. Visit to opera, Othello, with Father Platt.

* * *

Maison St. Joseph, Annonay (Ardèche)
Monday, January 31, 1955.

Dear Kink,

Acknowledges letter with Mass stipend. Will be happy to say 50 Low Masses for Kate and Pat. Remarks on the burden of work on Kink.

This arrangement of dividing one's residence seems to cut the weeks in half, not only seems to but does, so that there always seems to be less time for everything. We're either gathering up our things, locking up shop and running for the bus, or we're getting off the bus, putting things in order on the shelves and settling down to work again. From the point of view of our studies it would be more beneficial to stay all the time in Lyons where

January 31, 1955

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we would be close to the University, library, etc. But because the Community has recently incorporated the French Basilians at Annonay, and wants to make them feel the re-union has really gone into effect, we spend as much of each week as possible with them, just half the week in fact. The presence of the two Canadian Basilians makes the decision of the General Chapter last summer more concrete and effective. We are well taken care of at Annonay both as to lodging and company. The confreres there are really a grand bunch, very much like the ones back in Canada. There is a sort of Basilian "family spirit" that is noticeable on both sides of the Atlantic. So we actually feel at home which is a great blessing, and much for which to be thankful.

Intends to write Anne about a family matter.

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Maison St. Joseph, Annonay
Monday, February 7, 1955.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink.

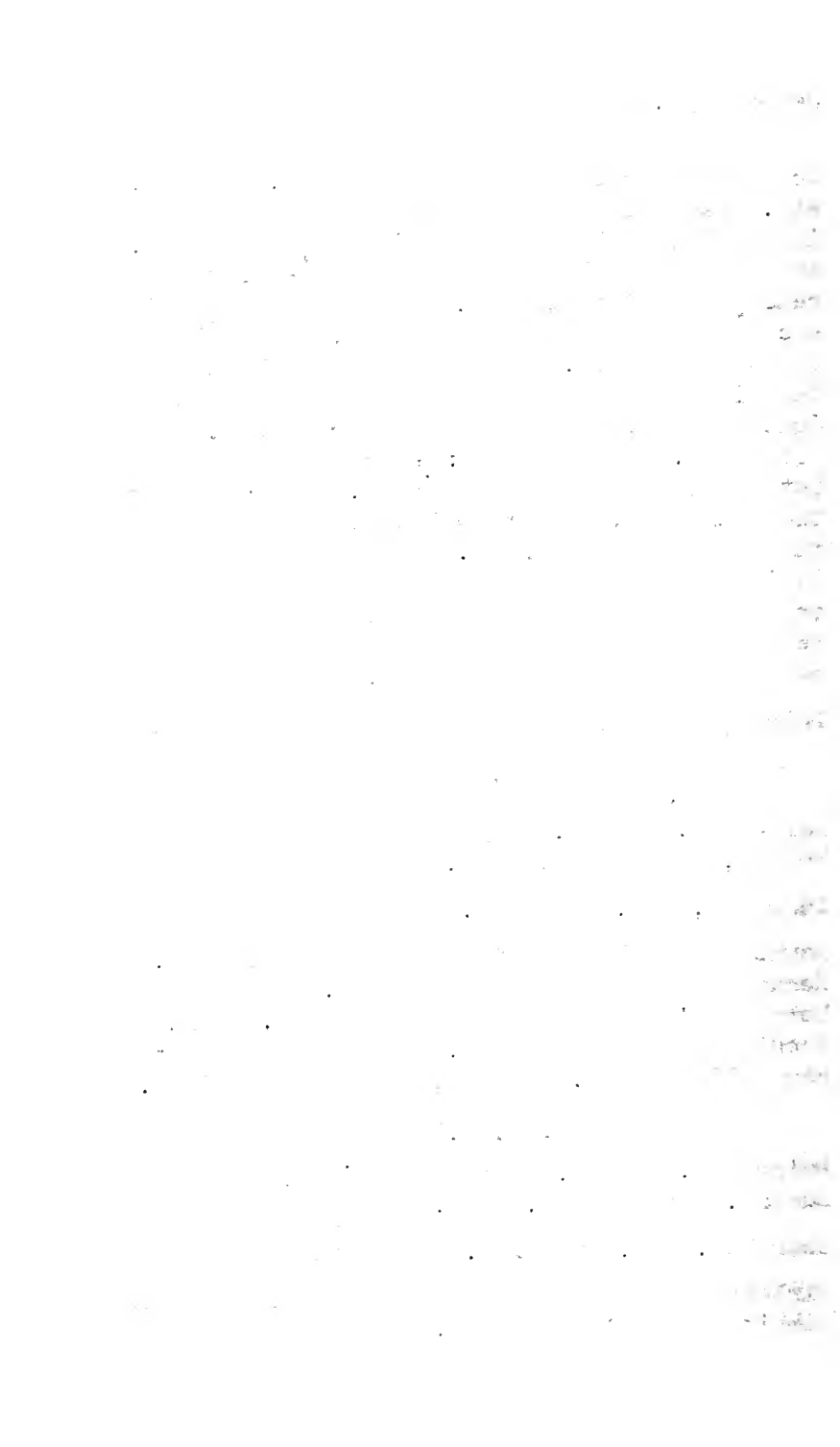
Acknowledges letter with five Mass stipends. Remarks on the weather in Canada. Glad to hear Pete's operation was successful. A bit about hunting wild boars. French government has fallen again. Sorry to hear about Hilda.

* * *

Maison St. Joseph, Annonay (Ardèche)
Sunday, February 13, 1955.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink.

Birthday greetings to Mother and apologies for missing father's birthday. Went skating with



February 13, 1955

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Father Wally Platt at the "Palais de Glace" in Lyon. The Rhône River flooded last week. Surmises as to cause of these floods.

Our work at the University goes on apace, though already we are looking forward to the holidays at Easter. Father Platt is going down to Rome with two of the Basilians from Paris, Fathers Leo Klem and William Young. I don't know whether I will be accompanying them, or going up to Paris to do a tour somewhere with Father Dick Donovan. It all depends on what I can get in the way of permissions from the Superior in Toronto.

Closing remarks.

* * *

Sunday, February 19, 1955.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

Acknowledges letter.

You are probably wondering why this is being sent from Lyon on a Saturday when normally we would be at Annonay by now. The explanation lies in a few holidays that the French schools and Universities enjoy just prior to Mardi Gras. Since the Basilians at Annonay are mostly all away doing parochial work for the week-end and for Ash Wednesday, Father Wally Platt and I decided to stay put, as it were, rather than go back to a deserted house. We will take the bus as usual, however, next Friday night. Our classes are discontinued for Monday and Tuesday, but start up again Wednesday morning, bright and early; that's a bit smaller holiday than the high school kids gets, they being free till Friday next.

February 19, 1955

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Intends visiting the shrine of St. Francis de Sales. Glad to hear that Pete is gaining strength. Account of visit to a museum of works of art in silk and other fabrics.

Tomorrow (Sunday) I am scheduled to say Mass in one of the parish churches here, St. Pothin, at 6:30 in the evening. It is a regular practice now to have an evening Mass on Sundays for the workers, but this will be the first time I will have had the assignment of offering it. It means no Mass in the morning for me, and also only a slight fast, i.e. from 3:00 p.m. on. I'm anxious to see how many will attend, and how many of them will actually be of the working class. That is the great lament of the Church over here today, that She has lost contact with the every day labourer.

We had the privilege of meeting Cardinal Gerlier yesterday evening. He lit up when he heard we were Canadians for he keeps a pleasant memory of his assistance at the Marian Congress at Ottawa. You probably saw him there, though my not have picked him out by name for there was quite a number of cardinals on hand then.

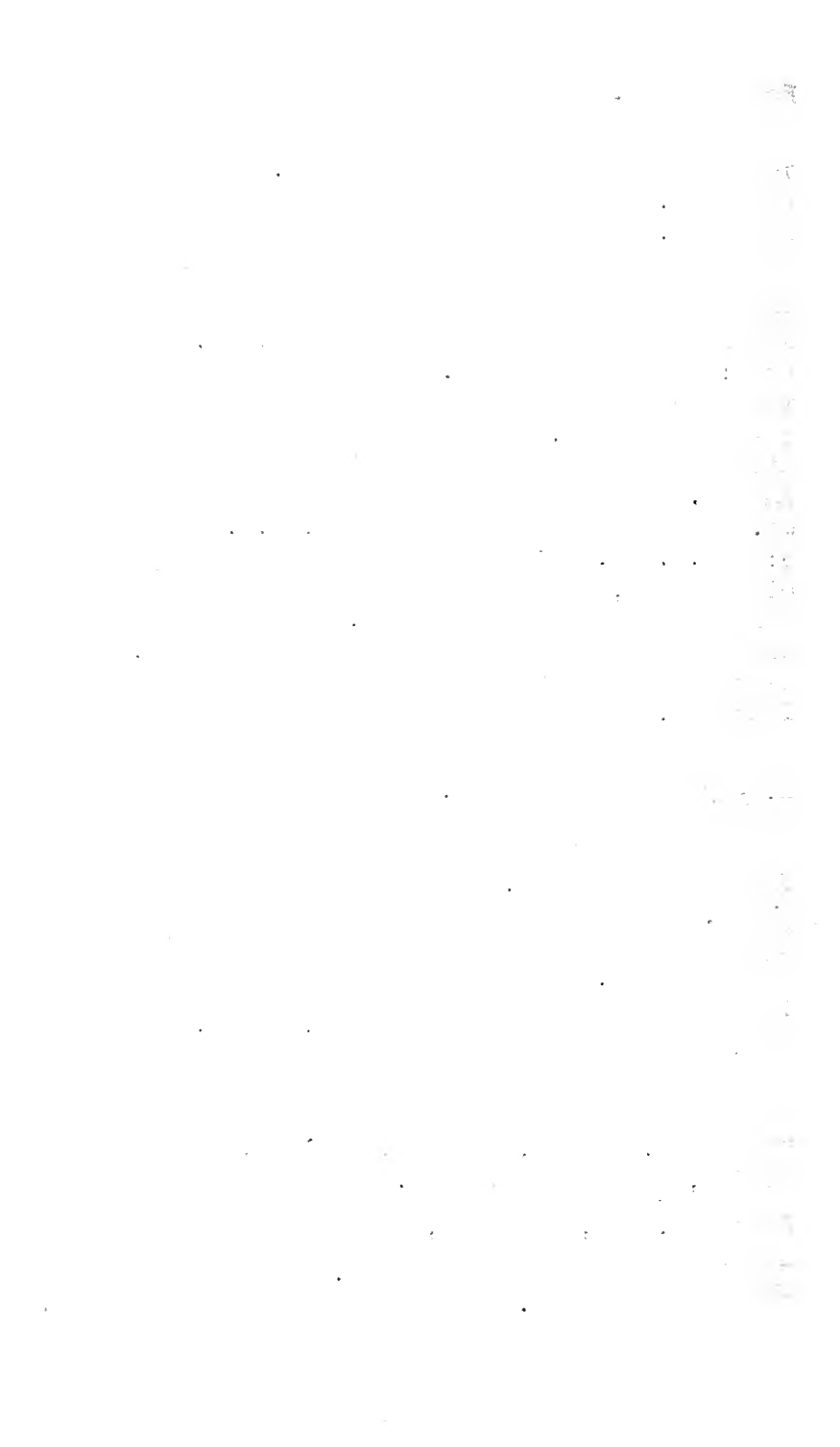
Government overthrown in France, again.

* * *

Maison St. Joseph, Annonay, Ardèche,
Monday, February 28, 1955.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

Opening remarks about letters. Compares Mardi Gras to Halloween. Lenten regulations in France.



February 28, 1955

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Food is sexcellent both at the Foyer Sacerdotal and at Maison St. Joseph. Weather has been cool but house well heated. Looks forward to box promised for Easter.

There is something that I wish you would send me though, Mom. It is a Butler's Catechism, the one we used to use, you know. I had one in Toronto and thought I brought it with me, but a minute search convinced me I must have left it with those other books that are at Anne's. It is one of the best summaries of Catholic doctrine; and since I am instructing a young Anglican each week it would work in handy for him. He is from London, but teaching a course at the University of Lyons this year, "La Civilisation Brittanique". I have been attending his one lecture a week, after which we usually went out to a café for some chocolate. He has been thinking of becoming a Catholic for some years, but never seemed to get up courage to start taking instructions until we got talking it over. I would ask you to keep him in your prayers, so that if it is God's will England will have one more stray sheep return to the fold. And if it doesn't cost too much fly over the Catechism to Lyon.

There are two other books that I should like to have and which are in those boxes at Anne's, in the second cardboard one to be exact. They are Knox's translation of the New Testament which Aida Guiry gave me for ordination; I want to work on it with my Anglican friend (Michael Jenkins is his name); the other is O'Connel's Book of Ceremonies. These are not needed in any great hurry, so ordinary mail will do for them. I'm sorry to put you to this

March 9, 1955

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bother and trouble; but they will be of help to me, for their equivalents are hard to find over here.

Asks prayers for a special intention.

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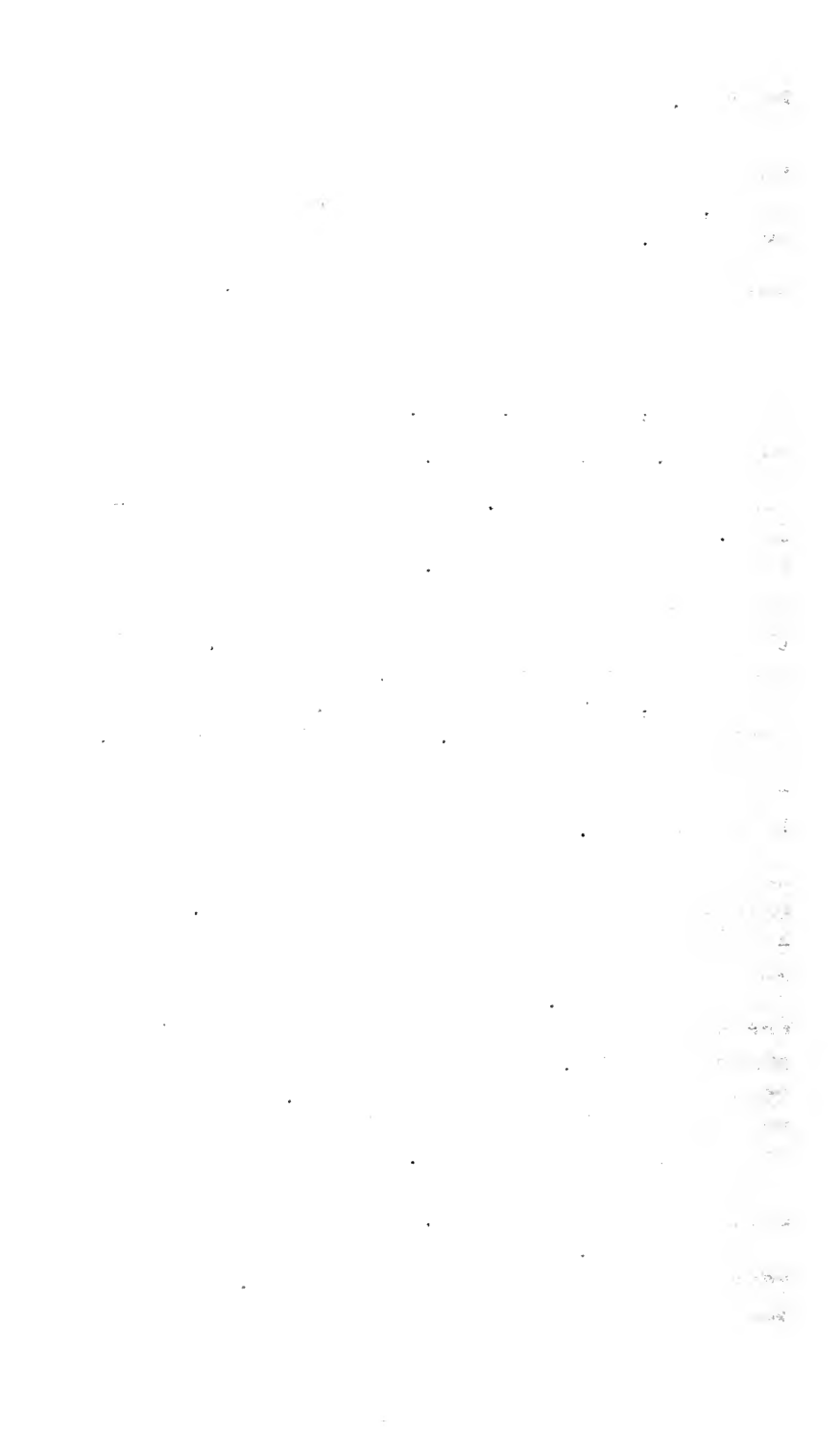
Wednesday, March 9, 1955.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

Acknowledges letter. Speaks of Cardinal Gerlier. Visited the chapel of the Visitation with Father Wally Platt.

Thanks very much for the Messenger containing the article on Father Patrick Moloney. He is one of our early confreres, and well remembered over here, buried here in fact, though he did most of his work at St. Michael's in Toronto. I guess he is just one more example of the Irish spreading the faith wherever God happens to chase them.

In my last letter I asked you to pray for a special intention during the past week. That intention was in fact that you would be given the grace to accept as God's Will what I have to tell you now. Not that I felt you would not accept it as such, but that prayer always strengthens us, and besides I thought it as good a way as any to prepare you, though I suppose parents are never surprised by anything their children say. In fact, you may have suspected already that I shall not be coming home this summer. I know the two years are almost up, and it was for a period of two years that I came to France in 1953. But since that time our Congregation has incorporated



March 9, 1955

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the French Basilians at Annonay with whom we are living now. In order to make the union more real and to help our French confreres get on their feet again, for they were on the point of dying out as regards vocations, the Superior General in Toronto has appointed Father Wally Platt and me to reside with them for a few years. In all likelihood I shall be coming home for a few weeks during the summer of 1956; but then I shall be returning to Annonay again, likely for another three years. It seems that this will be the policy for all Canadians who are appointed to Annonay. By reason of the distance and cost we could hardly make the return trip every second year, though I must confess I asked for as much in a recent letter; but we have been given to believe that the trip every three years is possible, and perhaps more in keeping with our vow of Poverty. At present Father Platt and I are both working on a teaching degree, the L. ès L., which when obtained will permit us to teach with State recognition on the staff of the College at Annonay. Just how long we will be teaching there we don't know for our Superior himself is unable to say; but we're content to leave that up to him.

Feels certain that they will accept his staying on in France. It is not a hardship for him. Unstable government does not affect him personally. Closing remarks.

* * *

Foyer, Tuesday, March 15, 1955.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

Greetings for the feasts of St. ^Patrick and

March 15, 1955

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St. Joseph. Recalls explanation of the greeting, "Top of the morning", given him in Ireland last summer. Thanks for the catechism which arrived safely.

Lent is gradually running itself out, and before long we will be once again in the activity of Holy Week. Last year Father Dick Donovan and I celebrated the Easter festivities with the Romans; this year we plan on being either in Belgium or Holland. I am going up to Paris April 2 to meet him, and from there we will do a tour of the Lowlands. Father Wally Platt is the one who is going to Rome this year, along with Fathers Leo Klem and William Young from Paris. The holidays present great opportunities for visiting other peoples, their cities, etc. It is a great privilege to be able to do it; wish I could remember everything we see and hear.

Closing remarks.

* * *

Monday, March 21, 1955.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

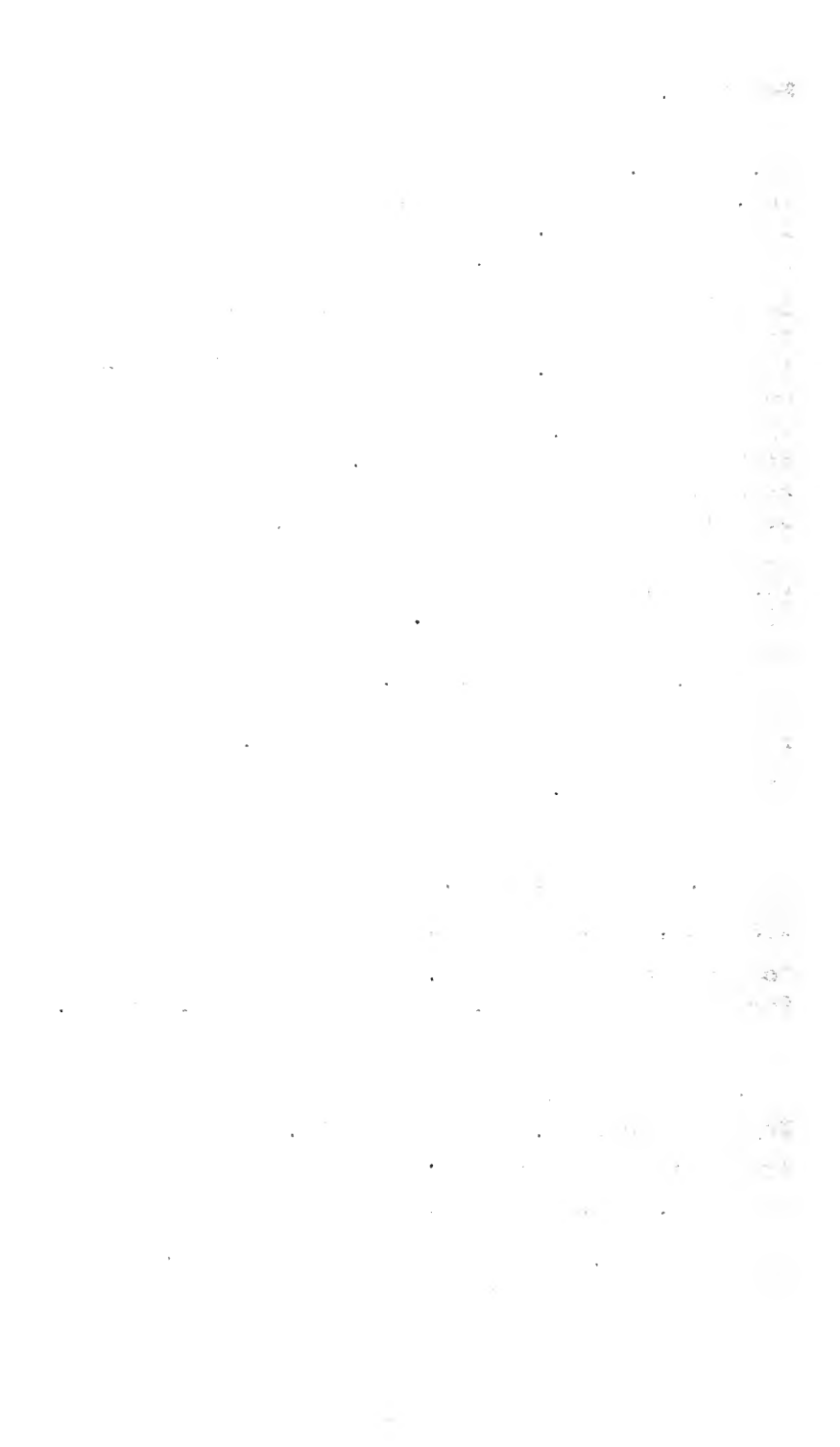
Comments on the weather. Tells of celebrations for the feasts of St. Patrick and of St. Joseph.

* * *

Foyer Sacerdotal, 5 rue Henri IV, Lyon
Tuesday, March 29, 1955.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

Apologizes for sending letter a day late. Will not write regularly, but as opportunity offers



during the next two weeks.

We came in on the bus this morning carrying a brief case each of books, a valise apiece, and a box of vegetables that the Superior donated to the Foyer. By the time we got everything stored away in the baggage rack there wasn't much room left for anyone else's. We brought the valises along prepared for the trip because we will be setting out from here, Lyon, this coming Saturday, hence will not have the occasion to go back to Annonay before leaving.

We're not quite going in the same direction, Father Wally Platt and I, in fact in directly opposed directions, for he is driving down to Rome with Fathers Leo Klem and William Young, and I am going north to Holland with Father Dick Donovan, whom I am to meet in Paris this Saturday night. We will be "at large" for a little over two weeks, coming back here April 18 in time for classes the next day.

Writes of forthcoming visit to Belgium.

Most of the Basilians at Annonay will be going down to their house at St. Alban for some of the holidays. It will undoubtedly be more comfortable there now than it was at Christmas; I hope so anyway, for their sake, for we nearly froze at that time. It has no heat in it save for one open fireplace, so fine weather is the only hope while you're down there.

Observations on the weather and closing remarks.

* * *

April 20, 1955

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Foyer Sacerdotal, 5 rue Henri IV, Lyon
Wednesday, April 20, 1955.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

Resumes correspondence after holiday.

Father Dick Donovan and I arrived back in Paris Monday evening, and I came on down to Lyon yesterday morning, arriving just in time to go off to two lectures.

The holidays were very enjoyable indeed. We went to the Benedictine Abbey at Maredsous in Belgium and spent most of Holy Week in the monastery where we made a retreat, and of course, followed and participated even in all the beautiful ceremonies. On Easter Sunday we went into Germany to Cologne to see the famous cathedral there, the one that was spared during the RAF attacks while the rest of the city was practically flattened. The following day we went to Holland, landing in at Utrecht and from there spent five days visiting Amsterdam, Isle of Markem, Volendam, Haarlem, Leiden, Rotterdam, with a few short excursions here and there to such places as the tulpis fields and the ports of the bigger cities. The last few days we gave to Belgium again going to Antwerp, Ghent and Bruges. The time went by all too quickly: before we knew it we were on the train from Brussels en route to Paris, and hence back to work again, to classes and the books. But we profited immensely from the change of air, surroundings and occupation, and can face up to the preparation for finals now with renewed energy.

Father Platt hasn't returned yet from his trip to Rome; I suspect he is coming back via

May 8, 1955

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Austria, Germany and Switzerland, and will hardly be in before the end of this week.

Closing remarks hold out possibility of a description of his holiday tour.

* * *

Maison St. Joseph, Annonay, Ardèche
Monday, May 8, 1955.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

On coming back to Annonay last Friday evening the Superior here had a surprise in store for us. He announced a trip to Geneva in Switzerland for the weekend. Having some business to clear up there he invited Father Wally Platt and me to accompany him and two other confreres in the community car, "la familiale", as they call it; so off we all went Saturday afternoon and just got back last night. Since I'm already in the act of describing the Easter tour I can scarcely deal with this in much detail, but suffice it to say that with lovely sunshine all the way there and back we had a delightful outing, and saw the Alps and Lake Geneva in their springtime glory. We went to Lausanne, rounded the lake and had hoped to go down to Mont Blanc and Chamonix but the Swiss police told us the road was impassable by reason of recent avalanches, so we had to retrace our road somewhat on the way back. The country was so beautiful all along, however, that we didn't mind seeing part of it again. Sunday around noon we had our lunch beside the road high up in the mountains, lunch that we had brought along with us, part of which included a cold roast chicken. You can

May 8, 1955

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imagine what a grand picnic it was. Luckily the sun was streaming down for there was snow within only a few feet of us which would have chilled the atmosphere otherwise. Close to the spot where we ate was a little stream of water roaring downwards from the snow towards the valley below. It was the coldest water I've ever touched, so cold I could hardly wash the glasses in it after lunch and almost too icy to drink. Being equipped with a couple of bottles of ordinary wine we didn't have to rely on it for beverage, wine being as you know the regular drink at meals in France. Well, that is just a digression, as it were, to let you know how we spent the weekend. The two days absent didn't help much toward preparing for the coming exams, I must admit, but they taught us things that are not to be found in the books - at least that is what I usually advance as argument for such excursions!

Expresses the hope that all are well and then resumes the account of holiday in Holland.

* * *

Wednesday May 18, 1955.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

Acknowledges letter, Apologizes for missing Mother's Day which is not kept in France. Comments on activity on the farm.

Yesterday the schedule was posted for the final exams, that horrible list that always sends a shudder through every student's spine. It has come earlier this year with the result that the exams are earlier. I

May 24, 1955

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have one next Friday, May 27, and another June 4th, both of them four hour sessions as last year. Father Wally Platt has his May 27 and June 1. So you can make that an intention in your Mass that day or those days rather. The oral exams will be sometime around June 16.

Closing remarks.

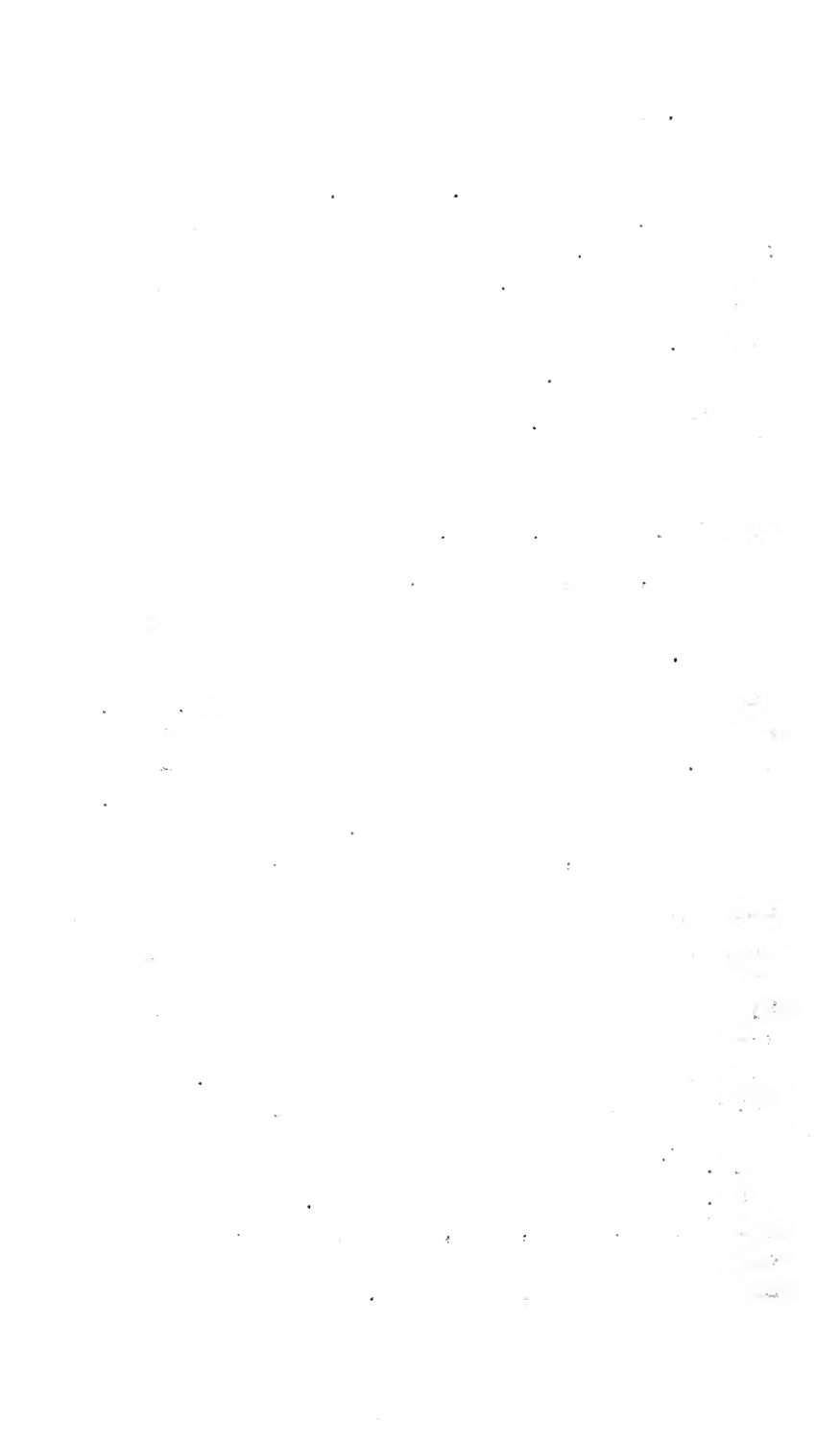
* * *

Tuesday, May 24, 1955.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

Remarks on the Queen's Birthday holiday in Canada.

Just received your letter this morning, Mom, and in it the sad news of Father Killen's death. Am hastening to return the Mass-card as you will want to send it before too long. Thank you for the intention; I'll get saying the Mass soon, perhaps this week. Father Killen was certainly called on to carry a heavy cross for a number of years and he seems to have done it faithfully and willingly. He will long remain dear to my memory as I think his kindness and patience in ehlping me to learn how to serve Mass contributed in large part to my vocation to the priesthood. So I have a debt towards him which I can only hope to repay by praying for the repose of his soul. I'm sure the Dorens will miss him very much, as will the whole parish. Perhaps in your next letter, Mom, you could send me the name and address of the one to whom I should write a word of condolence.



June 6, 1955

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The time is shortening in between us and the exams so we have cut out most extras save the essentials and are concentrating on texts and notes from morning till night. Friday morning will be our first session, after which we will devote Saturday to receiving Michael Jenkins into the Church. He is coming down to Annonay with us to be there for Pentecost, and then will head back for England since his teaching period is now up. Father Leo Klem is also coming down from Paris this Friday to spend a few days at Annonay before going back to Toronto. He wants to be there especially for the 14th of June (feast of St. Basil) when the French Basilians will take the same cassock as ours. Up to now they have worn the regular diocesan soutane. The matter of their official re-union with us is still being discussed at Rome, but word of approval should be coming through soon.

Closing remarks.

* * *

Annonay (Ardèche) Monday, June 6, 1955.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

Acknowledges letters. Asks that mail be sent only to Annonay, and not to Lyons.

Well Saturday came and went with the exam I was more or less dreading. It went off not too badly; at least I have hopes for a favourable result, though on checking up on a few things after getting home I discovered a few blunders that may decide the issue unfavourably. However, "quod scripsi, scripsi" and we can only await the results now on June 14. In the meantime Father Wally Platt and I are preparing for the orals which take place June 16 and after.

June 17, 1955

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Comments on weather and farming in France.

Father ^LLeo Kem is still with us and seems to be finding the quiet life at Annonay a pleasant change from the hustle and noise of ^Paris. ^HHe will be here until the 17th of June.

Closing remarks.

* * *

Annonay, June 6, 1955.

Dear Mom:

Just a note to send you this list of significant dates and ask you to fill in the more recent ones. I never seem to have it handy to add to it when news of births or deaths reach me. So perhaps you could bring it up to date and send it back. It is particularly handy for marking particular days in my "Ordo" - the little calendar booklet that gives us daily information for the Mass and Breviary. In that way I can keep you all in the official prayers of the Church. Thanks in advance, Mom; hope it will not cost you too much time.

* * *

Lyon, Friday June 17, Feast of Sacred ^HHeart.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

Apologizes for delay in sending letter.
Acknowledges receipt of letter with family news.

Well the exams are all finished now, and more or less successfully. I missed out on the June 4 session which will prevent me from receiving the degree which I was hoping to

June 17, 1955

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receive this summer. However, I shall try it again in the Fall, sometime in October, and hope it will go better then. The other written exam, June 1, was a success as well as the orals that followed. So I don't feel too badly about the year's work. If it could have been better, it could also have been much worse.

So far Father Wally Platt has been successful on all his exams. He has two more orals this morning but we feel fairly confident that he will come out of them in good shape. Beginning tomorrow we're both going to shut up the books for a while and get out of doors for some physical exercise that has been postponed during the past few weeks.

Sends greetings to Sister Mary Agnes.

Father Leo Klem is going back to Paris today and thence to Le Havre next Monday where he will take the boat home to New York. I am sending a little item with him for Dad which may take some time to arrive but which will be worth while when it does (unless he has taken the pledge since I left!)

Short account of racing car accident.

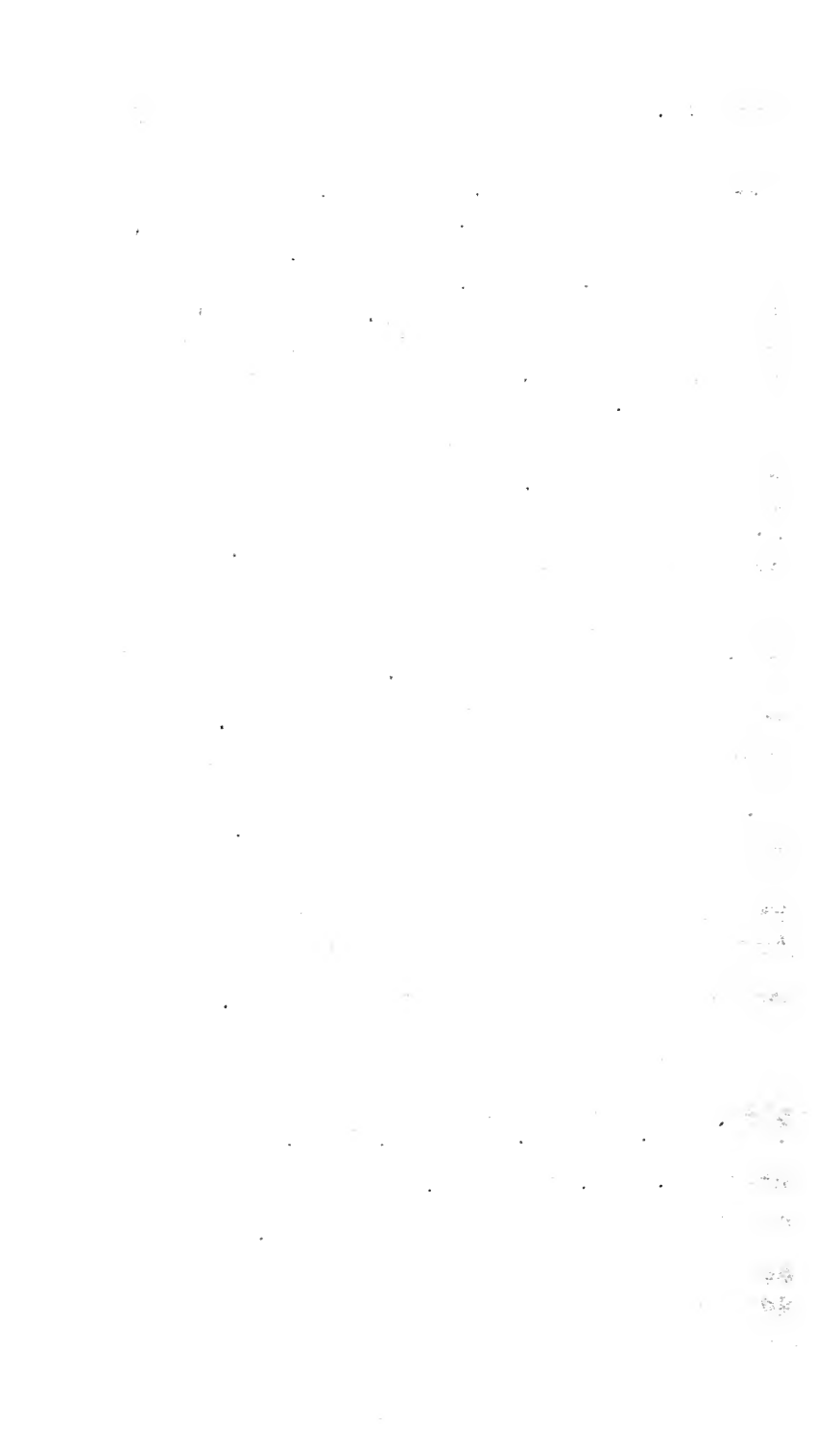
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Maison Saint-Joseph, Annonay
(Ardèche), Friday, June 24, 1955.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

Opening remarks acknowledge letter.

At the moment we have Father Hugh Mallon with us whom you may remember as being former



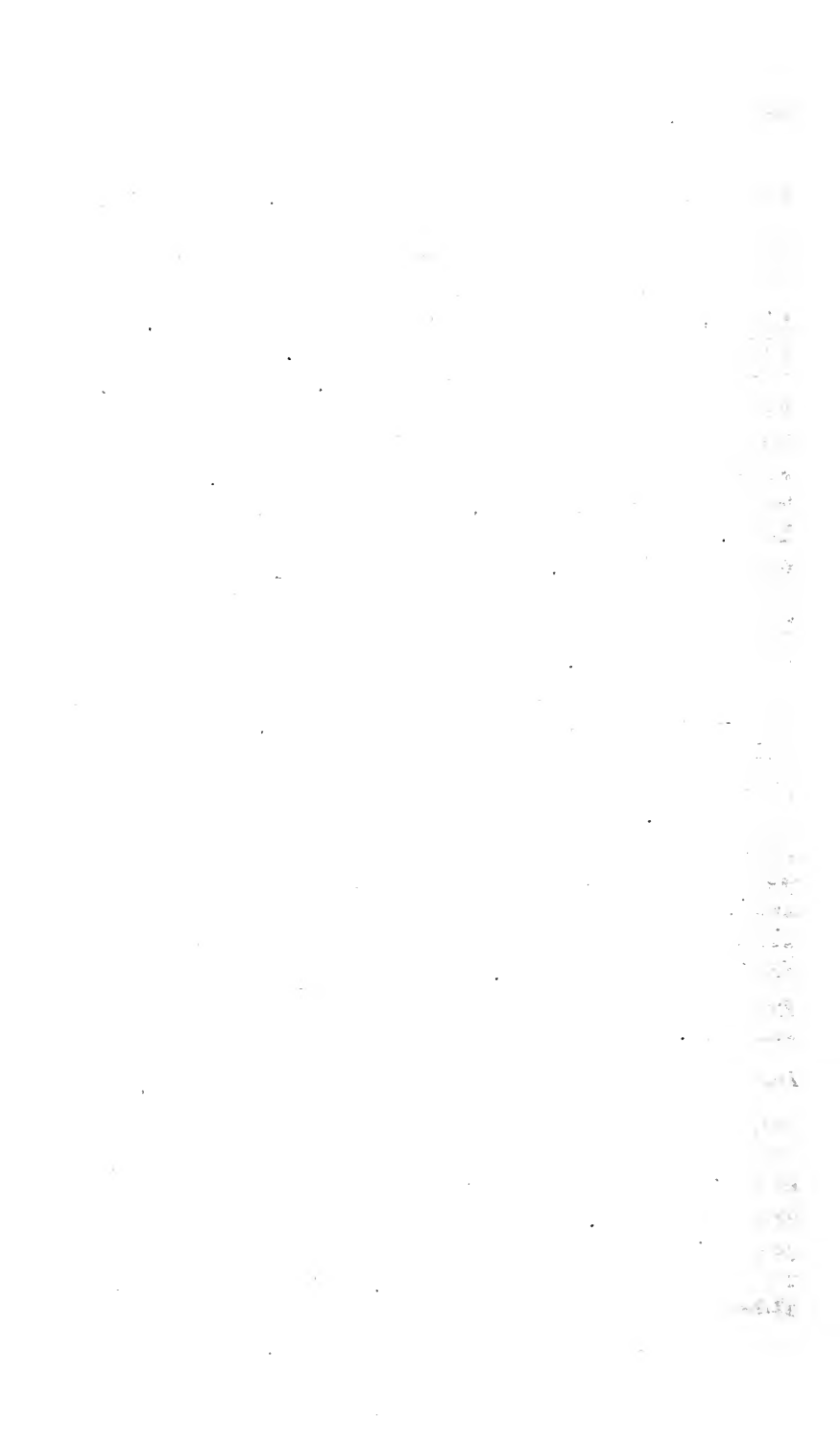
June 24, 1955

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director of the hockey team at St. Michael's. I believe he is also a cousin of Joe Murphy. He has come to Europe for a summer of travel and study, probably more of the one than the other; and came down from Paris yesterday. He will be with us for about a week. We also have Father Robert Crocker here, up from Rome. He is another Basilian who has been studying Canon Law this past year in Rome and will likely be there for another two years. He was ordained in 1953, but in Texas, his homeland. So you may not remember having seen his name or picture. He will be staying for about a month in the hope of picking up a better knowledge of French while getting to know the Basilians here. We are also entertaining a young law student from the University of Lyons, Jean-Luc Petiot from near Grenoble. Father Wally Platt made his acquaintance during the year and invited him down for a few days after the exams. He is a brilliant young chap (20 years old) but going through a bit of a crisis at the moment, re his future, his religion and society in general; so we are trying to do what we can for him in the way of advice and fraternal affection. You could put him in your prayers at Mass that he will turn out alright.

Paragraph on visit of family to Marysville.

You were asking about what type of work lies ahead now that the graduate studies are over. Unfortunately I haven't quite finished the graduate work. Having missed out on one subject I'll have to finish it off either this coming October or next June. I'm a bit undecided yet whether to take the exam again in the Fall or wait until next Spring. It depends



July 2, 1955

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a bit on whether they will need me to start teaching here at the College when classes reopen in September. In any case I will likely be doing some teaching sooner or later, teaching English to the French kids, and perhaps some Spanish too. I intend to review my Toronto courses in Spanish and brush up on some grammar just in case the assignment comes. At the moment there is no one here at the College who knows any Spanish, that is, among the Basilians. For a Canadian of the English language to teach Spanish to French pupils seems like a strange sort of foreign policy for all concerned; but the most logical is not always the most likely.

Next Saturday, that is July 2, I shall be changing my address for a few weeks, so you can write to me at Villa Saint-Patrice, Saint-Alban-sous-Sampzon, Ardèche, France. The Basilians have a sort of rest house down there where they go during the holidays. It's to the south of Annonay, about 100 miles from the Mediterranean Sea. The village itself numbers about 500 inhabitants, so we should be well removed from the noise and rush of big-city life such as one endures in Lyon or Paris. But I shall tell you more about the country down there later.

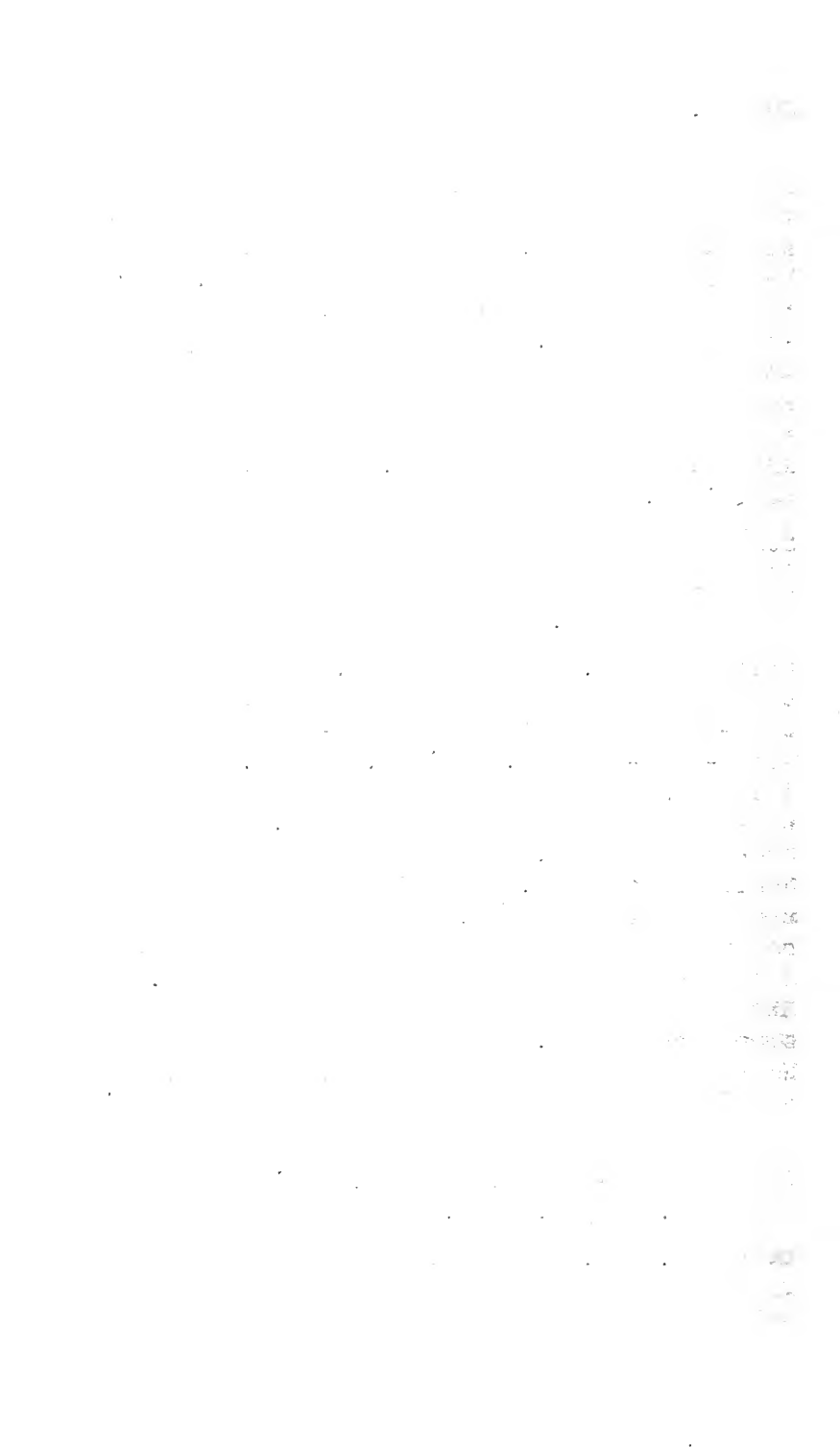
Closing remarks about weather in the Ardèche.

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Maison Saint-Joseph, Annonay, Ardèche
Saturday, July 2, 1955.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

This will likely be the last letter from Annonay

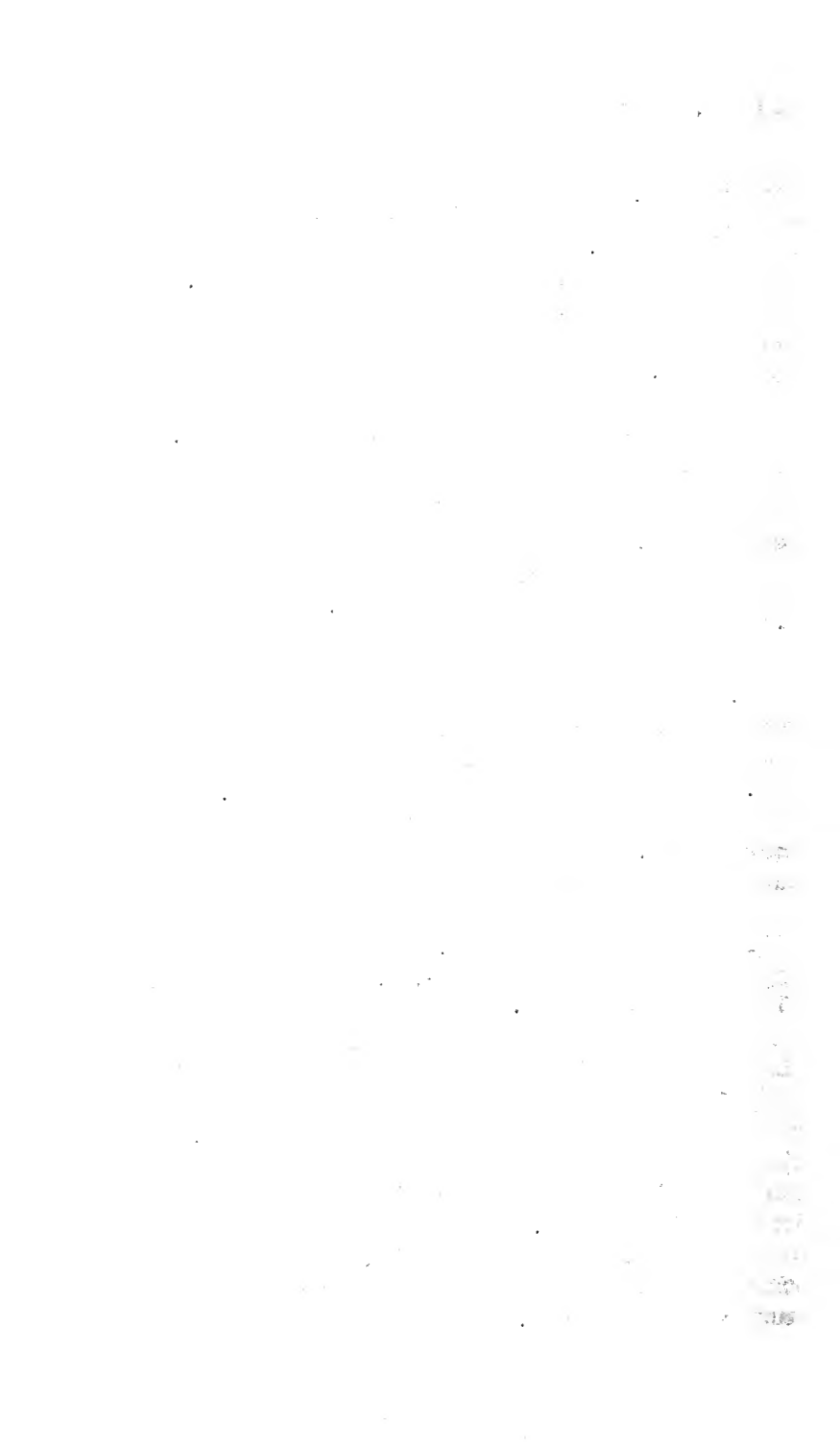


July 2, 1955

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for a while as we plan to pack up a few things and go down to Saint-Alban-sous-Sampson tomorrow afternoon. We will be there until at least the end of July, and perhaps August too, depending on the Superior. I have asked him for permission to do a tour through Germany and Denmark in August, but if he thinks a longer stay in southern France would be more profitable I'll be at Saint-Alban for most of the summer. In any case you can take that as the new mailing address for the present.

School finished up here this morning with a closing exercise in which the marks were announced and prizes distributed. Around ten o'clock the kids were let loose and they sure didn't take long to clear out this way and that. For this past week or so they have been getting more and more worked up as the warm weather made them think of hikes and swimming etc., rather than textbooks and exams; so that today they blew the lid and scattered to the four winds. Some of them who are in the Juniorate and who will be going to the Seminary later stayed long enough to shake hands with all the priests and say goodbye, but the others disappeared in a cloud of dust. One can hardly blame them - in a studdy classroom in this summer weather is not particularly exciting. Most of them will have the opportunity of spending some time in a summer camp at the sea or in the mountains during the holidays. Both the schools and the parishes organize camps for school kids on a much larger scale than is done in Canada. Perhaps short distances have something to do with it, although Ontario with its innumerable lakes provides just as many possibilities.



July 8, 1955

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Comments on peaches grown in Annonay.

We were expecting a letter to arrive today containing all the Basilian appointments for the coming year, but it didn't show up. The lists were posted this morning, I believe, in Toronto - perhaps Msgr. McAuley was there for it. He often likes to be on hand when they appear. There likely won't be any change for Father Wally Platt or me, but a fair number of confreres will be shifted around, and it's always interesting to see where they are placed.

Hopes Sister has a pleasant holiday and closing remarks.

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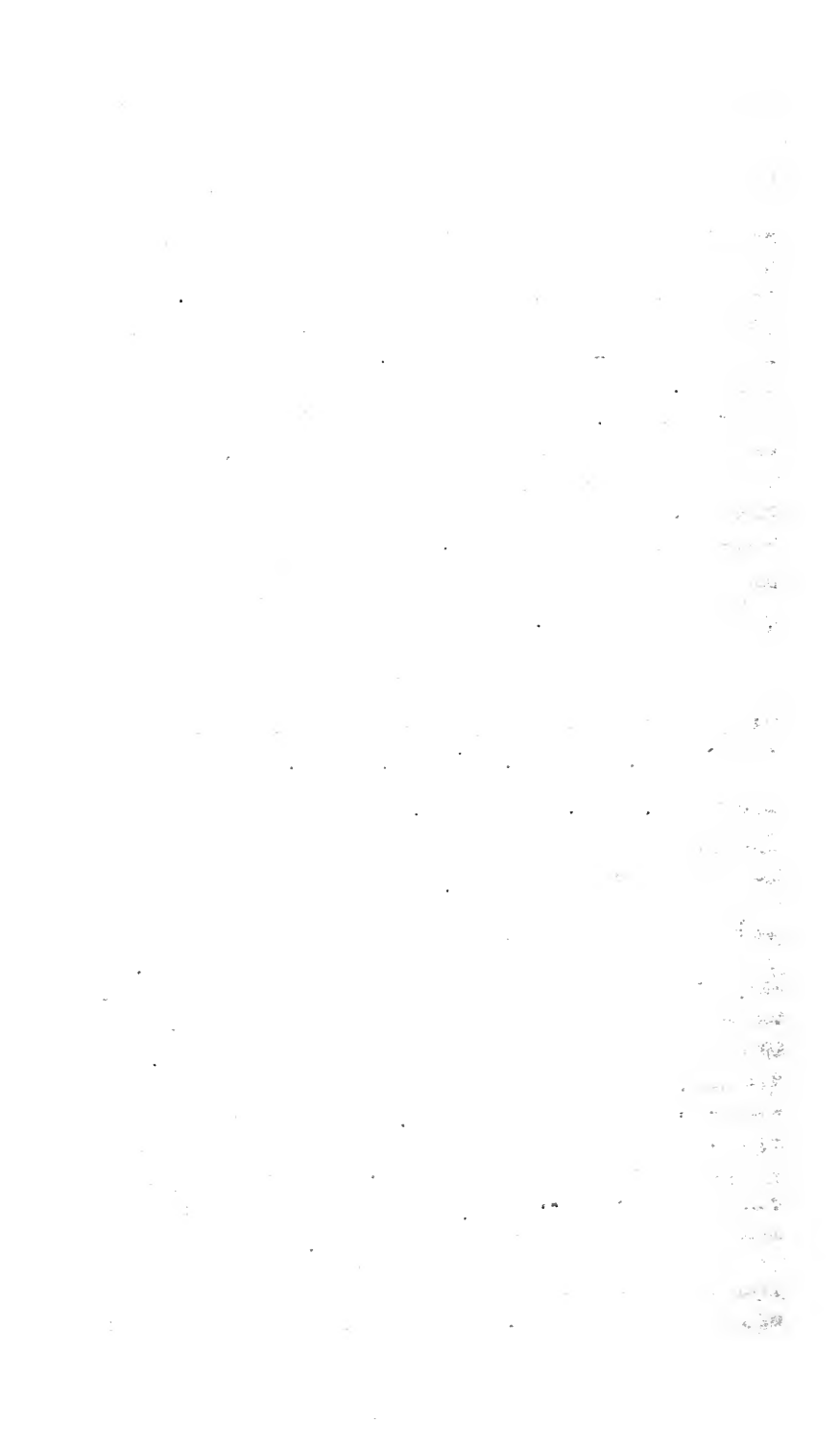
Villa Saint-Patrice, Saint Alban-sous-Sampzon (Ardèche), Friday, July 8, 1955.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

Acknowledges letter from home and comments on good mail delivery.

Well here we are in one of the quietest little corners you could find anywhere in France. St. Alban is a village of about 500 inhabitants most of whom are farmers and fruit-growers who own property in the surrounding area. It is south and a little bit west of Annonay at about 115 miles distance. The Mediterranean Sea is to the south of us about the same distance again, so you see we're some little way from the Côte d'Azur, the azure coastline that we visited Christmas time.


The village is built in a valley through which runs a little river called the Chazot;



actually it's only a creek but anything that runs over here seems to merit the title of river. It in turn empties into the Ardèche River, a name with which you are familiar. On either side of the valley rocky hills stretch up and roll off into the distance making transportation difficult and cultivation almost impossible, though herds of goats seem to be able to make their way around and manage to eke out an existence. We are very grateful to them, as a matter of fact, for they supply us with delicious cottage cheese known in this part of the country as "la tome de chèvre".

Since there is no dearth of rock around all the houses are built of chipped stone. Most of them are very old, even centuries old, but now and again a lovely new one can be found, giving witness to a prosperous fruit business, no doubt. The streets are all sizes, from about 12' wide down to 2' or 3'. The one that leads into our house just lets the car pass through and no more. I don't believe an ordinary American or Canadian car would be able to make it.

The house we're living in, Villa Saint-Patrice, once belonged to a silk merchant. He used several rooms in it for raising silk worms, and some vestiges of his industry are still visible, such as the racks for the trays and small open fireplaces for heating the rooms. At present there are some masons and carpenters working at making these quarters habitable. When it is all fixed up it will be able to house 30 or 40 people, though it won't be for some time yet that France will have that many Basilians. It has three storeys, two end wings,

and a lovely big verandah in front on the same level as the second floor. Roughly the shape of it is thus  but you will get a better idea of it when I send a postcard shows it.

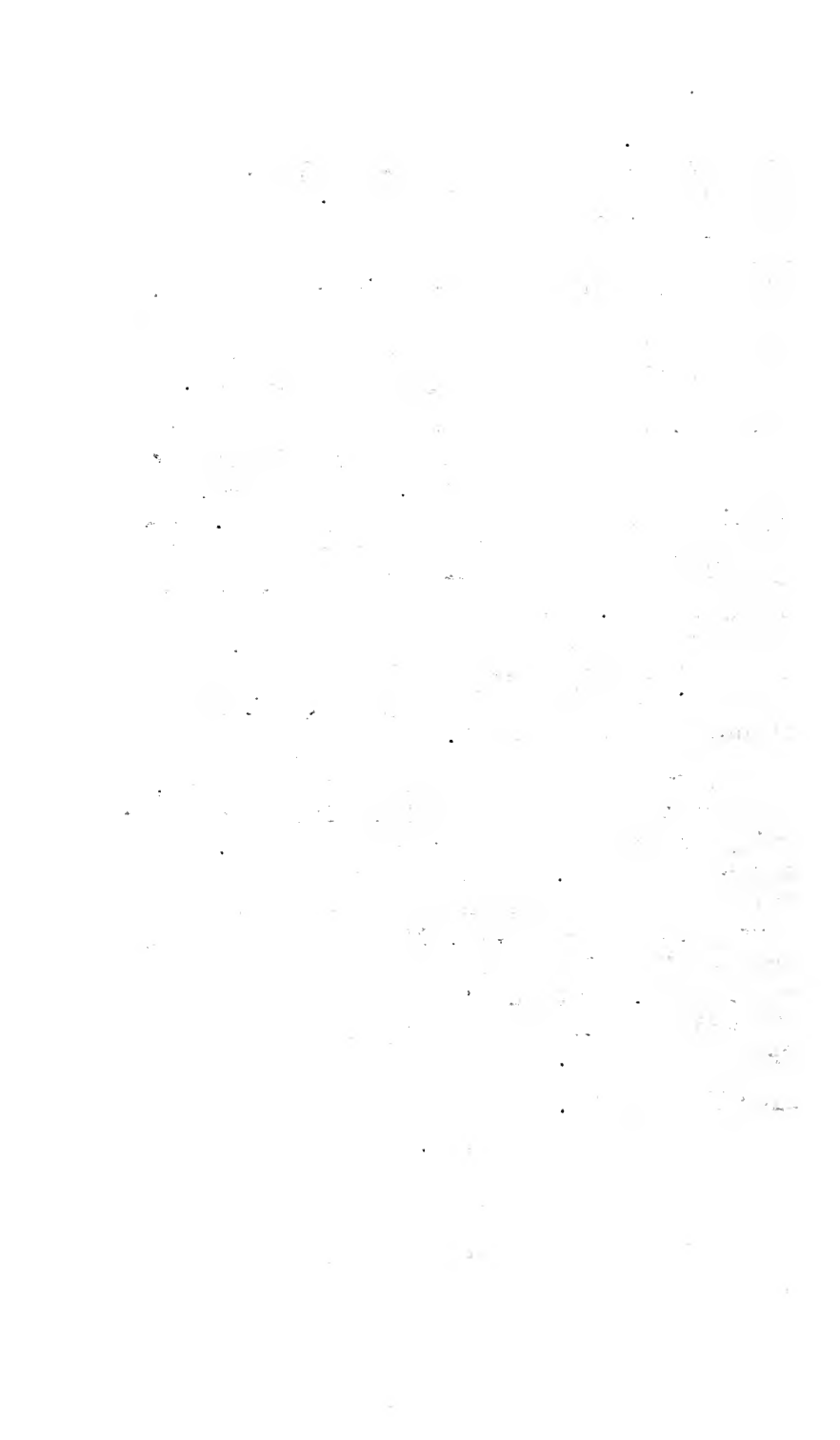
There are some grounds around it with flower beds and lawn where we do a bit of work in the morning before the sun gets too hot.

During the heat of the day we stay inside where the temperature is noticeably cooler thanks to the thick walls, and the heavy shutters put on for that very purpose. And thanks to a big Frigidaire which stands in the dining room we have delicious cool wine at meal time. So you see there are more ways than one of getting around a hot sun. So far in the afternoons we have been going down to the Ardèche River for a swim which helps also to counteract the heat.

At present there are eight Basilians here, three from Annonay or rather five since Father Wally Platt and I are also from there, and three from Rome. Since a couple of the Canadians from Rome speak very little French we have quite a time switching from one tongue to the other in an attempt to make everyone understood. But that's good practice for us who will likely soon be teaching English to French students.

Closing remarks.

* * *



July 15, 1955

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Villa St. Patrice, St. Alban-sous-Sampzon,
Ardèche, Friday, July 15, 1955.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

Thanks for letter and news.

You asked about Father Leo Klem. He should be back in Toronto by now, unless he decided to spend a week or so at his parents' home in Rochester. As far as I know he will be at St. Michael's College for the rest of the summer. I wrote Greg last night asking him to call by at the College the next time he is going through Toronto, Lindsay-bound, and pick up the parcel Father Klem is supposed to have for Dad. It should eventually reach its destinee.

With regard to next year's appointments, Father Wally Platt and I were assigned again to "Graduate Studies", so there is no change for us. We'll be living at Annonay and following courses at the University of Lyons as last year. At least I suppose that is how it will work out.

Father Terry Forestell is here at St. Alban now. You would remember him from last summer. He has just finished another year of biblical studies at Rome, and will be spending the whole coming year in Jerusalem and its surrounding countryside. It is part of his training as a professor of Sacred Scripture to become thoroughly familiar with the Holy Land. Unfortunately the Jew-Arab controversies in Paslestin don't facilitate travelling over there. He and I are leaving St. Alban July 25 to go on a trip over to Brittany, the northwest part of France. We will go through

July 15, 1955

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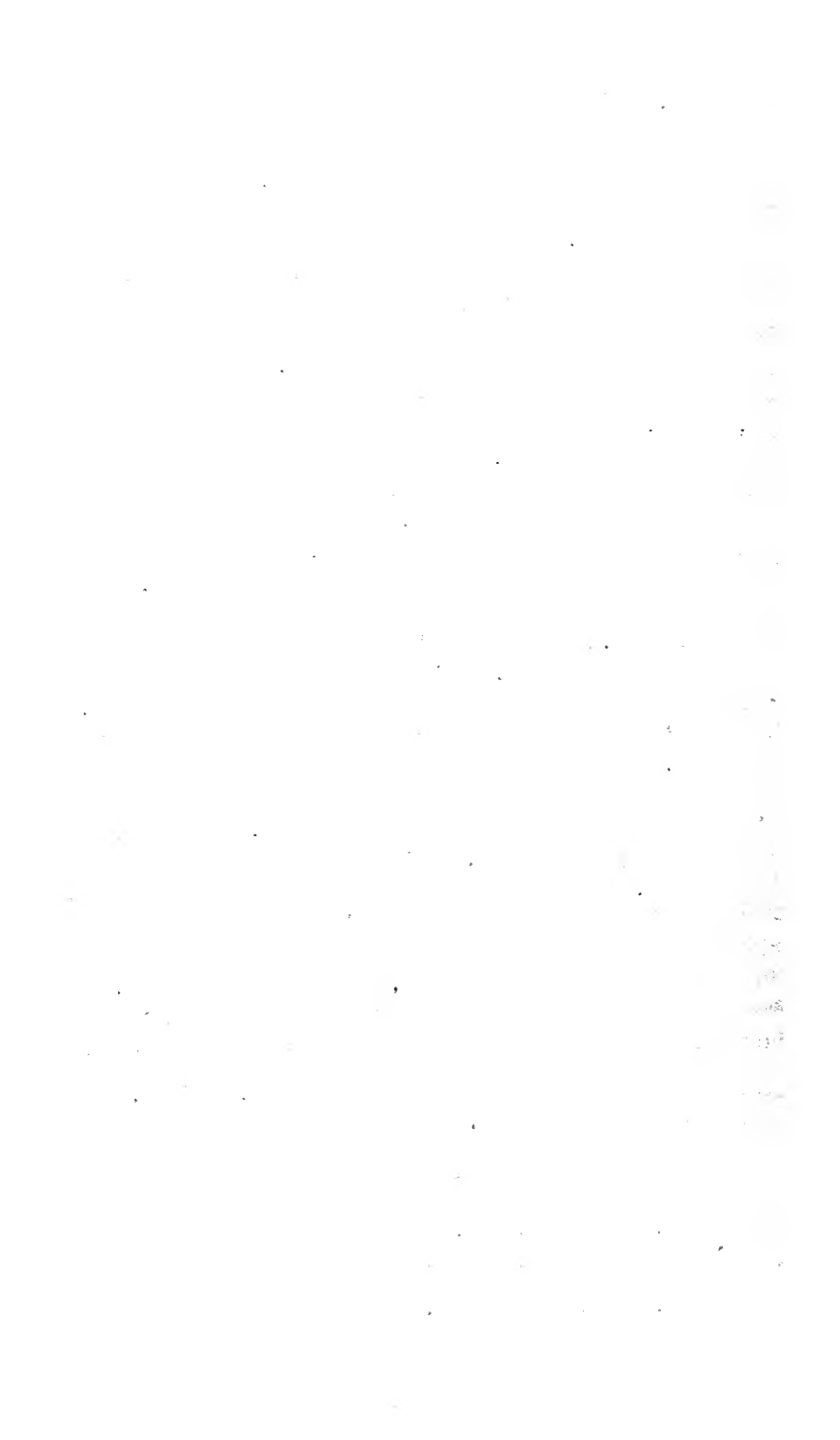
Normandy on the way back to Paris, and then on to Alsace where we will spend a few days at Strasbourg. Terry is staying there for a month to brush up on his German. I am going into Germany and up to Denmark and then over to London for a week from which point I will go back to France and to Annonay. The whole trip will take a month - July 25 to August 31, well, a little more than a month actually. Father Louis Bondy, our new director of studies, has given us both the permission and the necessary funds to do it, so we have him to thank for this new opportunity. They like us to see as much of the country as possible, and particularly the cities with their centres of art, etc., so we don't make any objections, as you can imagine. I'll be sending you a card from here and there during that interval, but can't promise that my letters will be too regular. Should you wish to contact me you can write to the following address: Foyer de l'Etudiant Catholique, 17 Place St. Etienne, Strasbourg, Bas Rhin. I'll be there on August 10, and probably for a day or two after. Perhaps in the next letter I'll be able to give you an address in London where I hope to be around August 22 or 23. After that date, Annonay would probably be the best bet for I hope to return there August 31 or September 1.

Comment on heat and gardening at St. Alban, then closing remarks.

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Villa St. Patrice, St. Albans sous Sampson
(Ardèche) July 23, 1955.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,



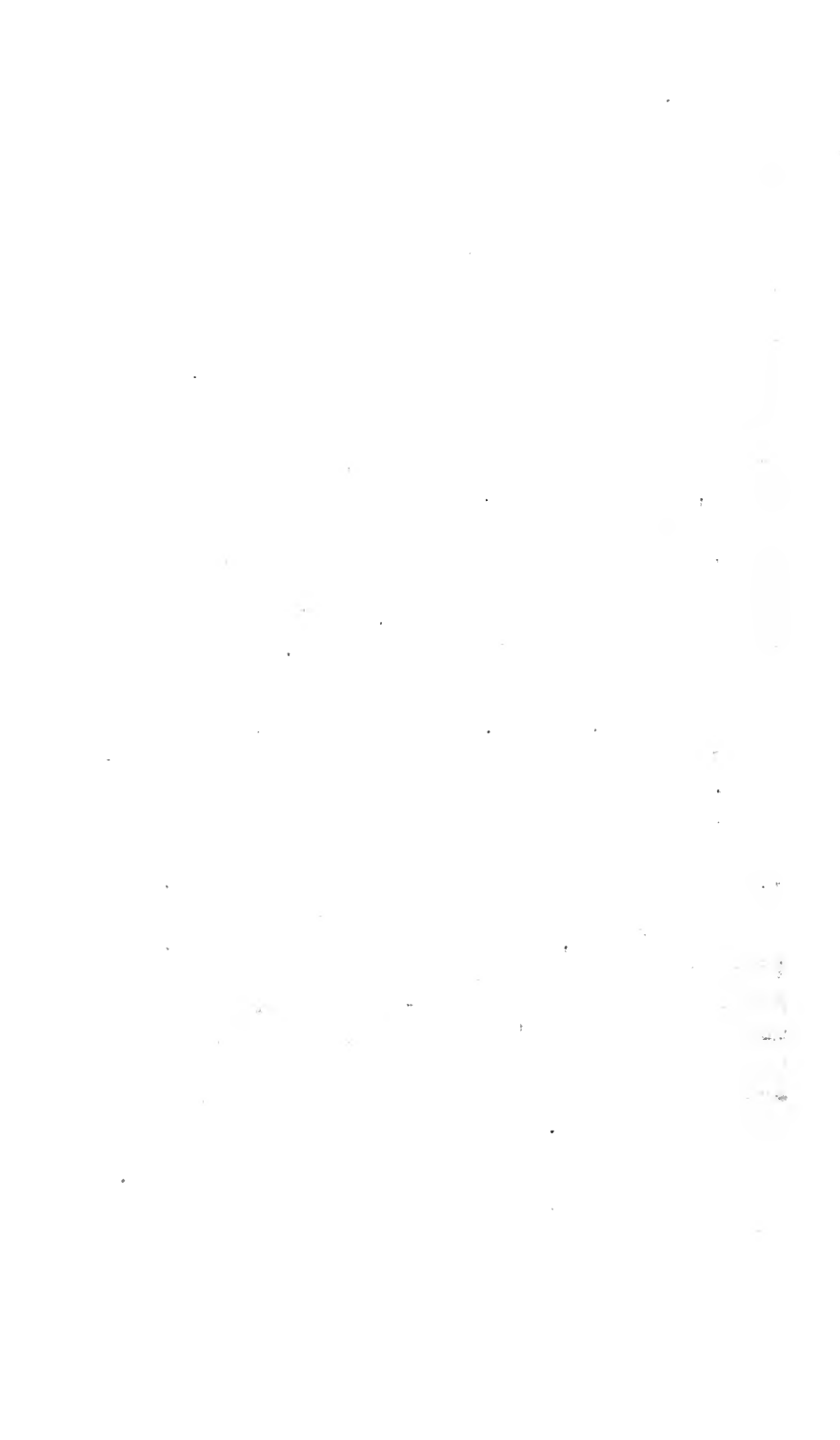
Opening remarks cover forthcoming tour.

Some of our confreres have left St. Alban for one place or another. Father Wally Platt has gone up to Nancy for a week of Social Studies, and Father Michael Sheehan has left for Paris and later England where he will be doing parish work for the rest of the summer. Three more of us will be pulling out Monday morning, but there likely will be a few coming from here and there to replace us. Father Charles Rouse, the Superior, is the only real stable element; he will be here until the closing date. Being a summer house, however, it is not surprising that there should be a fair amount of coming and going. It's the same at Strawberry Island in Lake Simcoe.

Yesterday we went out for a drive to the little church of St. Basil, near Lamastre, where our Community had its birth back in the 18th century. It is about 100 miles from where we are here, and since much of the road is through the mountains we did a lot of twisting and turning before we got there and got back. There are actually some curves, or better hair-pin turns, that surpass 180 degrees. It is very lovely country though, which compensates for the somewhat tiring trip, though I must admit I didn't appreciate spending most of the night turning the wheel of the car this way and that (having done most of the driving during the day).

Description of harvesting on farm next door.
Closing remarks.

* * *



August 8, 1955

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St. Albans sous Sampson, Ardèche
Saturday evening, July 23, 1955.

Dear Kink,

Acknowledges receipt of letter.

I hope Father Hubert Coughlin has answered you, and that there will be no complications, for you have had plenty of headaches already, eh? Don't be surprised however if either Father V.L. Kennedy or Father L.J. Bondy answer, because Father Coughlin was changed in the July nominations. He is no longer superior of the Curia nor director of students abroad. However, I don't think that will affect the placing of the money; and should a question come into your mind don't hesitate to drop me a note.

Observations on weather in Canada. Wishes her an enjoyable holiday in Adirondacks. Will leave Monday on a five week trip.

* * *

1 rue Jean Dolent, Paris 14
August 8, 1955.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

Outlines summer trip to date. Has been to Brittany and is spending a couple of days in Paris with the Eudists before going to Strasbourg. Is anxious for news and looks for a letter at Strasbourg.

* * *

Copenhagen, Thursday, August 18, 1955

Dear Mom, Dad and Kink,

August 18, 1955

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Account of trip through Germany, Frankfurt, Hamburg and then to Denmark. Is spending three days in Copenhagen. Danish farms are neat as a pin. Will go on to Sweden.

* * *

76 Albermarle Road
Beckenham, Kent, England,
August 29, 1955.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

Has arrived in London and sent by ordinary mail an account of his travels through Sweden and Norway. Arrived in Newcastle, England on Friday morning and was in London by 5:00 p.m. Should be in Annonay by September 3.

Father Platt and Father Hugh Mallon are somewhere in Ireland at the moment. I hoped to see them before leaving London, but they won't be back until September 1 or 2, just right for us to miss out. However Father Platt will be back at Annonay for the retreat, beginning September 22, so we'll compare diaries and travelogues then.

Visited Canada House. Found people in the Scandinavian countries could speak English. Closing remarks.

* * *

Villa Saint Patrice, Saint Alban sous Sampzon
Ardèche. Tuesday, September 6, 1955.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

Well, here we are back at the starting point from which we left July 25, having covered

September 6, 1955

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some 3,000 or more miles and having seen a quantity of things as you can imagine. It is good to be back and repose a little after several successive weeks of going here and there, but the experience gained is priceless, and if given the choice I would likely do the same trip again. From now until the 21 of September I will be here at the above address working in preparation for an exam that I hope to pass in October. At the moment I can't give you the exact date because nothing official has been posted at the University yet, but I would recommend the intention to your good prayers in the meantime, and will let you know exactly later on. Most of the confreres are here now rather than at Annonay, so I decided to spend the rest of the summer here with the community. We'll be going back to Annonay together on the 21st. Father Wally Platt is still in England, at London staying with the same family, the Loescher's, where I stayed. He will likely come back to France about the same date as we leave here.

Thanks for letter and the Mass intentions.
Family news.

The priests here are looking forward to a visit from the Superior General, Father George Flahiff, from Toronto. He is due to arrive the 28 of this month and preside at the taking of vows and of the habit. The Basilians of France are not yet officially Basilians such as we are in Canada and America. But on the 29 of September, a significant date for you and Dad, they will take the vows and adopt our soutane, rule and constitutions. That will make them full fledged members and

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Annonay will become another house of the Congregation with canonical recognition. Naturally there are many things to be worked out, and Father Flahiff will have to answer a lot of questions, but his visit will do untold good towards cementing the recent union of the two communities.

Closing remarks.

* * *

Villa St. Patrice, St. Alban-sous-Sampzon, Ardèche; Tuesday, September 13, 1955.

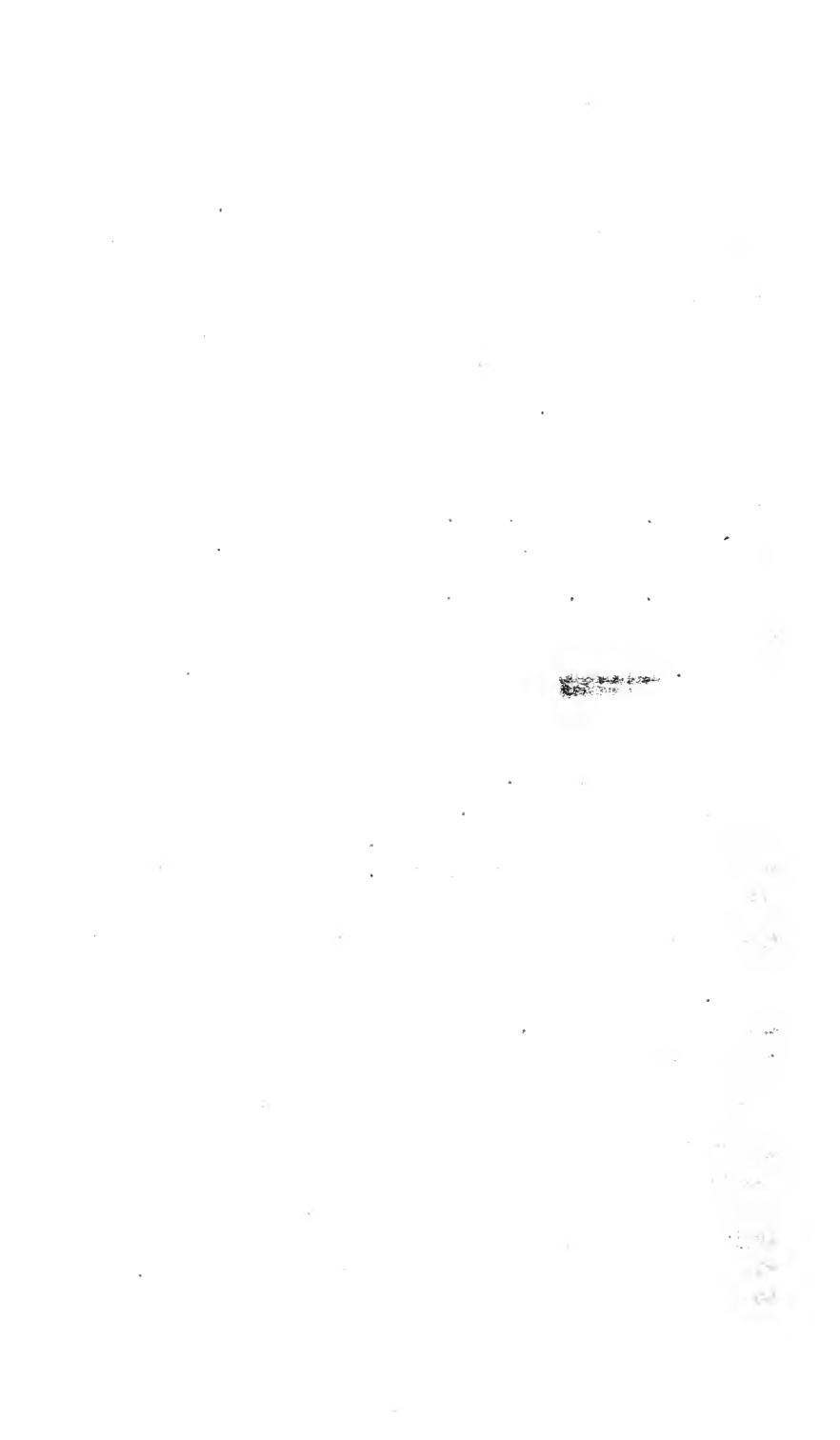
Dear Mom, Dad, and RM,

Opening remarks contain news of weather in France. Acknowledges letter from Greg.

Tomorrow we are all going over to a neighboring village where there is an immense Way of the Cross outside. The twelfth station has an altar at its base, something like at the Martyrs' Shrine in Midland, and I am to sing a High Mass there at 10:30. It is a place of pilgrimage for feasts of Our Lord's Passion and especially tomorrow, the Exaltation. The Mass will be outside if the weather is good, in the church nearby if not. I will offer it for you, Mom and Dad, for your anniversary at the end of this month.

Work on his studies is proceeding.

It came over the news here one day that Toronto had refused to receive the Russian delegation of agriculturalists, and the the United States, whose official guests they were, feared possible diplomatic complications. Was that the case? If you could find an



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article on the matter I should be glad to read about it. The priests I talked with about it were quite elated at Toronto's stand; but I would like to know a few more particulars before discussing the topic.

Good crop of grapes in the district.

* * *

September 15, 1955.

Dear Dad,

Acknowledges letters and gift of \$2.00

At present I am working in preparation for an exam that is coming up some time in October. I'll hardly know until it is over just what the work will be for this coming year; more than likely it will be a continuation of my studies in Modern Languages, though.

Next Tuesday or Wednesday we shall be going back to Annonay. This place will be closed up here until our next visit, probably Christmas time.

Closing remarks.

* * *

Maison St. Joseph, Annonay (Ardèche)

September 24, 1955.

Dear Mom, Dad, and R.M.

Apologizes for sending letter later than usual. News from home.

Our Superior General, Father George Flahiff, arrived in Paris yesterday, and will likely be coming down to Annonay the first of next

September 30, 1955

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week. He has come over from Toronto to regulate a number of affairs that arise out of the reunion of the two Basilian Communities. The confreres here are anxiously awaiting his visit. At the moment they are all on retreat, I say "they", excluding myself because Father Dick Donovan and I made our retreat at Easter time - Holy Week in the Benedictine Abbey of Maredsous, in Belgium. The retreatmaster, Canon Rochigneux of the Foyer at Lyon is so good, however, that I manage to attend his conferences just the same.

The studies are going on apace, not without an interruption now and then, though, I must confess. The University will send out the Convocation letter sometime in early October letting us know the date of the exam. More than likely it will be around October 20, but I'll let you know definitely later.

* * *

Maison St. Joseph, Annonay,
Friday, September 30, 1955

Dear Mom, Dad, and RM,

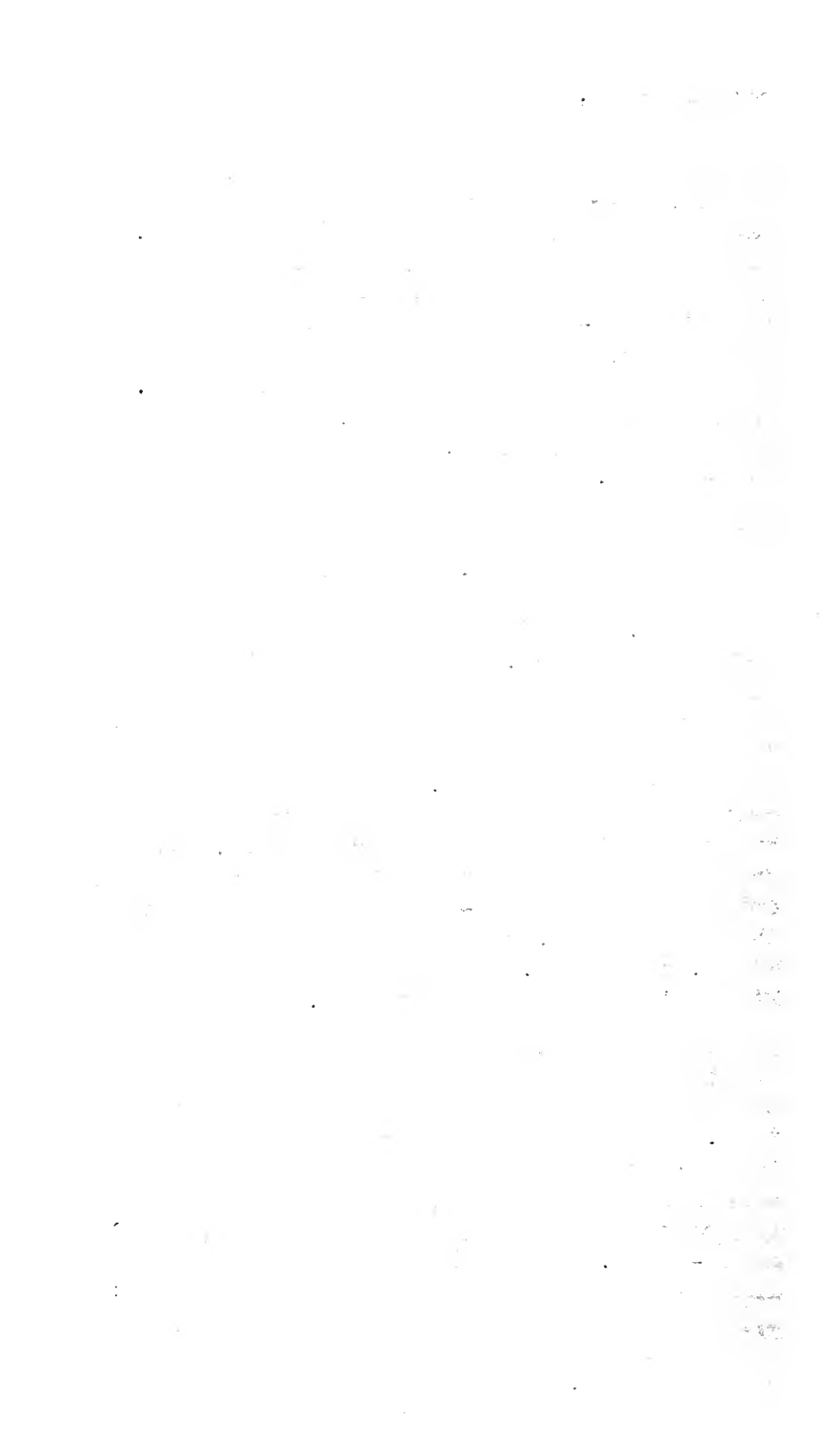
Acknowledges letter from home with news of Russian "incident" in Toronto.

Everyone is fine here. The Retreat is over now and we have Father George Flahiff with us for a few days. He presided at a touching and historical ceremony yesterday when the French confreres officially became Basilians the same as in America. There will be henceforth just the one big family of Basilians, just one community instead of two as has been the case since 1922. Father Flahiff read the decree from Rome which declared the reunion a



fact and then made a wonderful speech, or better, gave a splendid short sermon on the significance of the act for all concerned. He then received the Vows of six of the new Basilians (the other five are free to take them or not - for the time being they are going to remain as they were) and finally made the appointments for the coming year. Father Charles Roume was made Superior and given two councillors, one of whom is Father Wally Platt. We feel happy about that because he will be able to give any "overseas" point of view that may need to be given at the council meetings. After the ceremony we had a photographer take a few pictures of the group. It will be interesting to see how they turn out. He chose a spot outside at the corner of a building where it was so windy we could hardly stand still. The picture will be published in the Basilian Annals this November probably. Once that ordeal was over we went to the refectory for what the Superior called "un repas fraternel". It turned out to be quite a banquet with several entrées and toppings-off on either side of the main course, accompanied by appropriate wines, of course. So you see we fêted St. Michael's Day in a fitting way.

Today the Superior General and Father Charles Roume are down at Viviers paying a visit to the Bishop and dining with him at the same time. They will have many important questions to talk over and will more than likely make some weighty decisions, particularly with regard to the College here at Annonay, Collège Sacré-Coeur. Once back Father Flahiff will likely spend the rest of his stay interviewing different confreres and visiting about the property. He will be going on to Rome probably next Thursday.



October 15, 1955

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As yet no definite date for the exam, but the word will be coming along any one of these days. In the meantime the studies are catching, though not in excess. They had a couple of days rest while I chaperoned Father Flahiff around to some of the places of interest in the surrounding countryside. There are several centres where the Basilians used to have houses or schools in Ardèche that were taken away from them in 1903 at the time of the Separation of Church and State in France.

Closing remarks about Fall colors in Canada.

* * *

Annonay, Saturday, October 15, 1955.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

Another Saturday has rolled around and I hope it finds you all well. We are all fine here, with the exception of Father Antoine Epitalon who has been complaining of a severe pain in his head lately. He is getting on in years now - 82, so it's hard to know whether his trouble is the after-effect of a cold he had recently, or just a malady due to his years. In any case he bears it wonderfully well, not wanting to put anyone to any trouble, and suffering pretty well in silence. But the rest of us are in A-1 shape, thanks be.

Acknowledges letter and remarks on the Fall in Canada.

Speaking of Lyon (by the way, the word should be spelled Lyons in English, but I usually forget and put down the French form), the University sent out the convocation letter this week for the coming session of exams. Mine

is to be on the 25 of October that is a Tuesday from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. So you can sort of keep that date in mind, as I know you have been doing all along so far. After these last few weeks of intensive study I feel pretty well prepared for the exasm; but you never know how it will go. There is a certain amount of chance in the affair.

At present our garden is undergoing a transformation, at least part of it. We are endeavoring to make a tennis court. There is quite a lot of shovelling and levelling to be done as the ground is by no means uniform. Four or five of us get at it for an hour or so every afternoon, but we don't seem to have made it very playable yet. The inauguration day will probably be next summer some time at the rate we are going. However, it makes a pleasant opportunity to work together as a group, and we usually manage to extract a lot of fun from it - that's likely why the thing isn't going ahead too quickly, there's more talking and figuring than actual work.

The kids at the Collège are on Retreat these days, from Thursday to Sunday. They don't have any classes, which pleases them no end, but they have a firly heavy spiritual schedule in place of them, which doesn't go so well always. They seem to find the silence very difficult, impossible in fact, for they talk to one another at the slightest provocation. French kids are in general more high strung than ours and hence all take to periods of no talking less easily. From what I recall of the Retreat at the High School two or three

years ago, St. Michael's, it was on the whole much better observed. However comparisons are both difficult and dangerous.

* * *

Maison St. Joseph, Annonay,
Monday, November 7, 1955.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

Opening remarks on the weather in France and on mushrooming hunting.

Speaking of luck (the lack of it would be more correct) the exam didn't turn out so well despite all our hopes. The examiner didn't see fit to accept my version, and more than a half hour's argument between him and me didn't convince him. So I will just have to prepare it again and write it off next June in the hope that the third time will be the charm. As a matter of fact there will be no time lost on account of it; rather every hour of work that I put on it will be valuable for my work later on, for my teaching. But it would have been good to settle the affair and be rid of it once and for all. This year, therefore, I will continue studying at the University of Lyons, and will do a bit of teaching here at Annonay, though not very much, just two hours a week. Next year will probably bring a full schedule of teaching, but I will be seeing you before then, so we will have the occasion to talk it all over in detail.

Closing remarks on Halloween in Canada, Uncle Ned's illness.

* * *

November 12, 1955

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Maison St. Joseph, Annonay
Saturday, November 12, 1955.

Dear Mom, Dad, and RM,

1. Death of Mrs. Coty, wife of the President.
She was much loved in France.

Yesterday was the anniversary of the Armistice and a holiday both in the lower schools and in the University. We were at Lyon for it, and joined in the celebrations by assisting at Solemn High Mass in the Basilica St. Martin d'Ainay, the church just near the Foyer Sacerdotal. It was fitting to be there yesterday in particular because not only was it November 11, and hence the feast of St. Martin, but it was also the date of 1000th anniversary of the church. The parish dates from 955 A.D. and they think the first church was officially opened on the same site in that year on November 11. The people flocked in great numbers to assist at the Mass yesterday, in such great numbers that Father Wally Platt and I had our own time finding two places even a half hour before the ceremony began. The Benedictine monks from the Abbey of Hautecombe some 100 miles to the north and east of Lyons came to officiate in the sanctuary; their prior celebrated the Mass and gave the sermon, a splendid one at that. We came down to Annonay in the afternoon by bus as usual.

It looks as though I shall be spending most of this year at Annonay, going in to Lyon only for a special class now and again, perhaps once a month. My work this term will be of such a nature that I can concentrate better on it here at Maison St. Joseph where all my

November 12, 1955

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books are, than at the Foyer, which is really only a stopping off place. So it might be just as well not to send any mail to the Lyon address, though should you have sent some already don't worry about it. Father Platt will be going in regularly as last year, and will see to it that it arrives.

We had a good letter from Father Terence Forestell the other day. ^AHe has done some travelling already in Upper Egypt, the Red Sea area, and Transjordan. The conditions are not the best. He was with 34 other priests, all scripture students, who spent eight out of eleven nights sleeping on the ground and were obliged to bring enough food with them in the bus for the entire trip. It was a bit exhausting, but he saw a lot of country intimately connected with the Bible. His quarters in Jerusalem are somewhat better; he is at the Ecole Biblique with the Dominican Fathers, and fairly well lodged, though a bit lonesome for the confreres, I think. He will be there all year and will likely return to Rome next summer.

Closing remarks.

* * *

Maison Saint-Joseph, Annonay
Saturday, December 10, 1955.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

Opening remarks.

Thursday we celebrated the great feast of the Immaculate Conception. ^{It}It is not a holy day of obligation here, hence the kids had school as usual, except in the afternoon, which they

regularly have free on Thursdays anyway. Father Wally Platt was in Lyon for the day and saw the famous Willuminations[¶], which I may have described to you last year at this time. After dark each house has its window sills lined with small licking vigils lights which transform a rather unattractive city into a fairyland town until they finally burn themselves out. The streets are always crowded, to such an extent that it is impossible to drive a car in the downtown area. Lyon is not the only city that has preserved this custom, contrary to what I had believed, but the illuminations seem to be attributed to it in a particular way. It is France's main centre of devotion to Mary, outside of Lourdes, of course.

We have received news this week of the death of Father Thomas Vahey at St. Michael's College. He was a great classics teacher, Latin and Greek, and taught Predication when I was at the Seminary. He is a big loss to the Community, to the Community Militant, that is, for he will continue to do good work through his intercessory prayers, we hope. I don't know who will be able to replace him, especially for his Greek classes.

News of the French election campaign.

* * *

December 17, 1955

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Maison St. Joseph,
Annonay, Ardèche, France.
Saturday, December 17, 1955.

Dear Mom, Dad, Kink, and all,

Makes this letter his Christmas message.

First of all though, thanks so much for your good letter, Mom, of December 9. It took a long time to come for some reason, eight days, but is none the less welcome for the relatively slow crossing. I was amused to read to you account of the Superior General's visit, and I'm sure he will be too when he receives the letter I wrote him today. I hope you did not feel too badly over it, as the mistake is not a very great one, more comical than unfortunate. I can readily understand how you would not seize such a difficult name over the phone, particularly when pronounced by Monsignor McAuley. It could have been Pratt or Platt or Black or several other names as well as Flahiff. In fact, he has had mistakes made more than once over the pronunciation of his name, so no need to think you committed the first one. It made me laugh out loud when you mentioned that you had expressed the hope of my definitive return in the near future; the situation was an almost perfect case of dramatic irony, or better, mistaken identity. Perhaps you will have the occasion later on to receive Father Flahiff again; I think he goes down to see the Monsignor from time to time.

News of Lindsay's new radio station and of weather in Canada and Europe. Closing of school on December 23.

December 17, 1955

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Father Clarence Drouillard, a Basilian who is studying this year at Paris, the Sorbonne, is coming down to Annonay next Friday to be with us for Christmas. His name is French and he is so, from the Windsor district, Ontario. We shall likely go the following day to St. Alban, the house where the holidays are spent. I'm not too keen on going down there as a matter of fact, neither is Father Wally Platt, since there is no heat in the building save what one can make in the fire-place. But we're hoping the fine weather will continue and that we won't need to fire up. An open fire is very cheery, and even delightful but the rooms where there is no fire-place are anything but.

Cloeses with Christmas greetings.

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January 2, 1956

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Maison St. Joseph, Annonay
Monday, January 2, 1956.

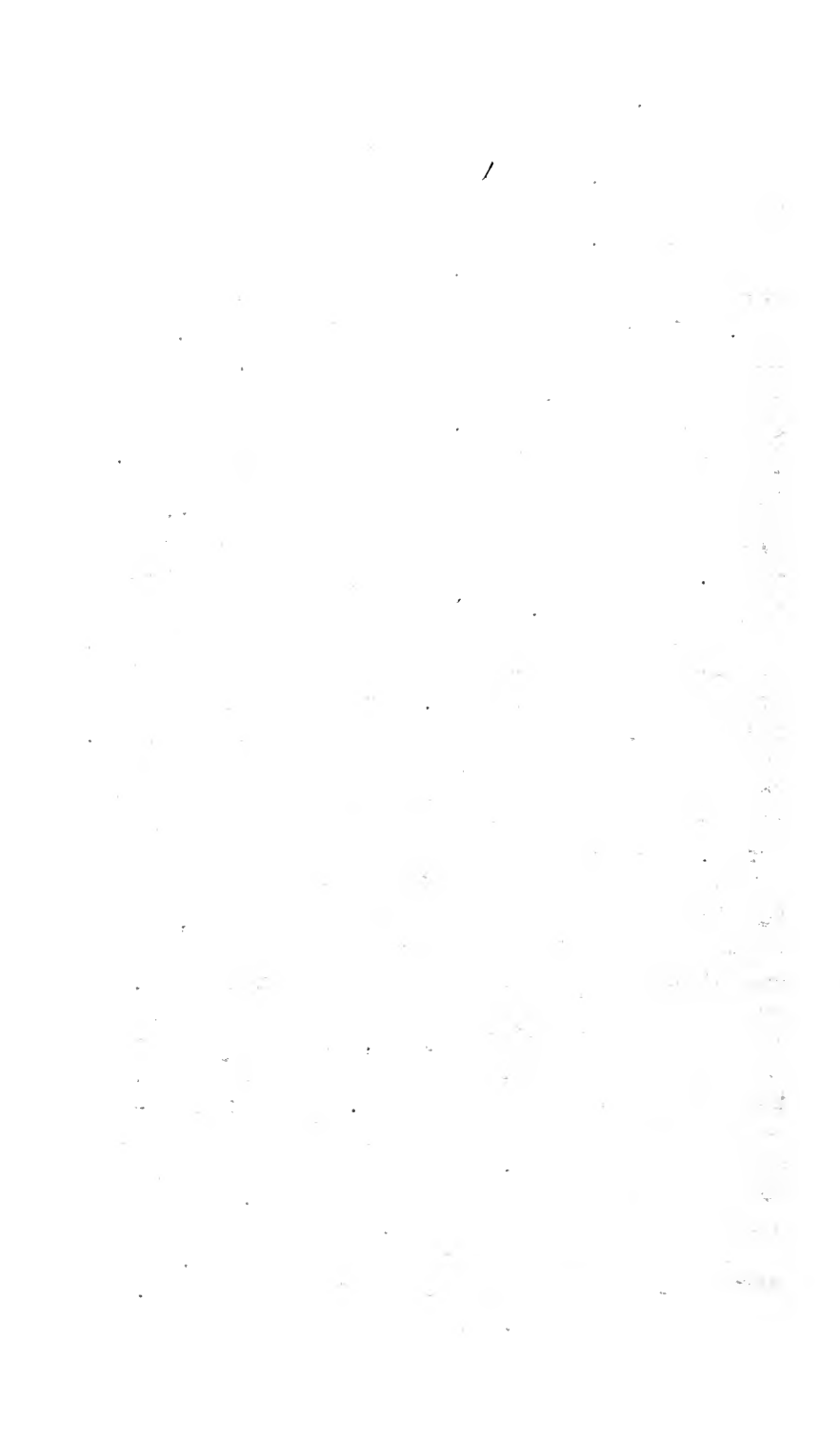
Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

New Year Greetings. Acknowledges letter with snapshots.

Father Clarence Drouillard and I came up from St. Alban Friday morning and went on to Vienne (France not Austria) to visit that very old Romano-Gallic city. We were of course interested in its ruins, ancient architecture, etc., but in truth I think what attracted us was a certain restaurant there which has the reputation of being the best in the world. We had our supper there New Year's eve, and what a supper! It would take too long to describe here so I shall have to wait until seeing you this summer to tell you of it in detail. The exquisite quality of its foods and wines though makes me think that perhaps its reputation is not an exaggeration after all. Of course the prices are about unique in the world too, but since I was there as a guest it didn't hit my billfold too hard. From there we went to Lyon where Father Drouillard caught the train up to Paris Sunday afternoon. I came back to Annonay on the bus around 5:00 p.m. The rest of the confreres who were at St. Alban came up today in the automobile arriving here just in time for dinner at noon. So with the return of everyone the holidays are pretty well over for another while. The kids will be coming back tomorrow morning to start classes again.

They would have come back today but as you know this is election day and ever means of transportation is used to bring the electors

to the polls. I went down to the voting centre for Annonay this morning with Father Félix Pouzol, one of the confreres here who has the right to vote. It was interesting for me to see how the procedure is carried out. The voter comes into a large room, a dance hall in fact here at Annonay, goes to a table in the centre where all the ballots are laid out in piles. The ballot is a sheet of paper about half the size of this letter. On it is written the name of the party and the four men whom that party hopes to have elected to the House of representatives in Paris. There are four men who will be elected from this region, Ardèche; other regions may have more or less depending on the population. It will be unusual if the same party has all four of its men elected, but in any case its ballot bears the names of its four candidates. Each party has its own ballot and its four delegates and since there are 29 parties the elector has 29 different ballots to choose among. He picks the one whose party he favours, takes a little blue envelope which is handed to him by one of the presiding officers, goes into a sort of confessional where he folds ballot once and puts it into the envelope, comes out and goes to the voting desk where he presents his voting card, has his number and name called out by one of the officers, is declared eligible to vote, slips the envelope into the big ballot box under the eye of another officer, and then hears his name solemnly called out as having voted. He is marked off in the register, and goes on his way having fulfilled his electoral duty. It sounds like a complicated system and it is.



January 18, 1956

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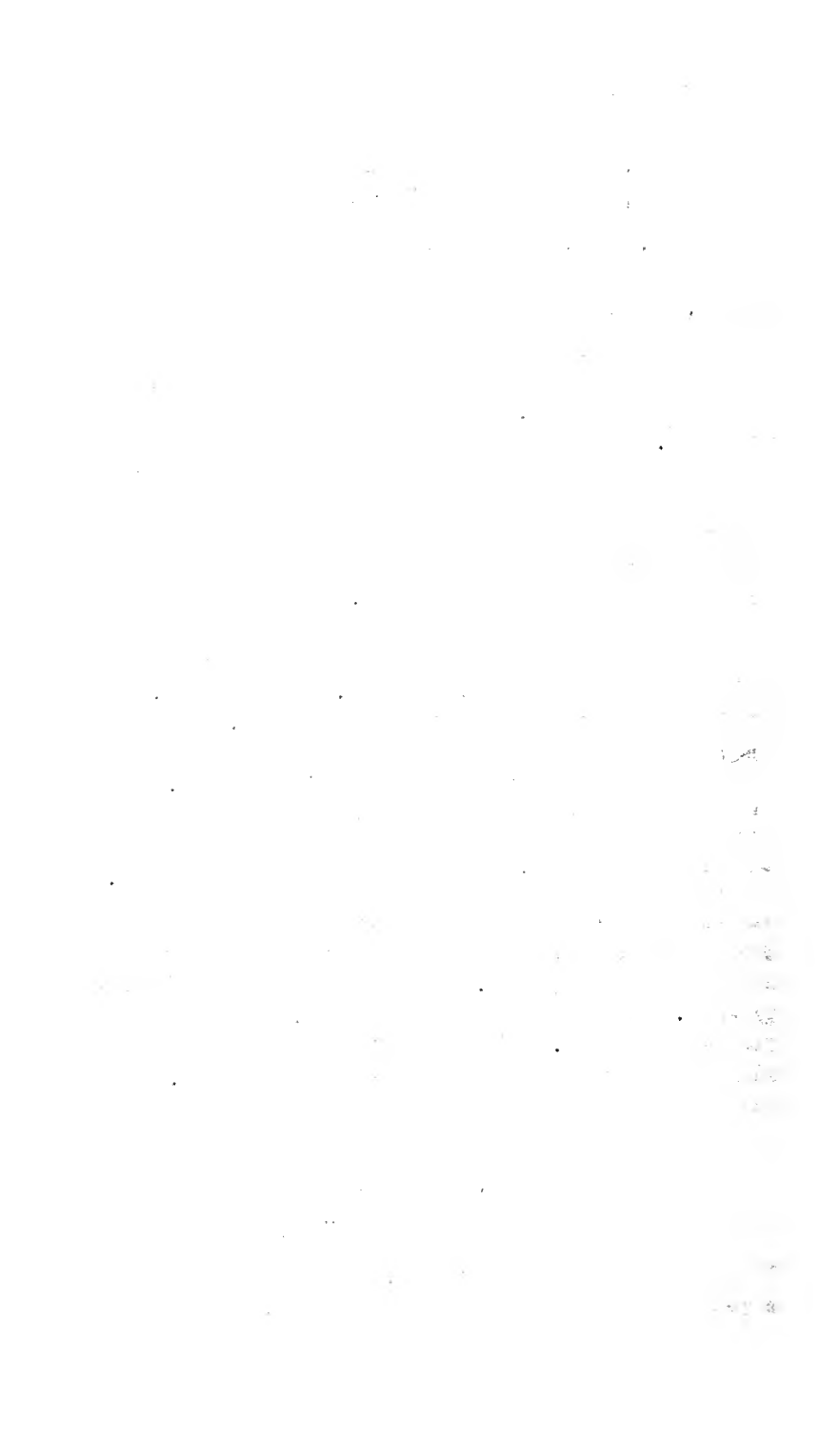
Maison St. Joseph, Annonay,
Wednesday, January 18, 1956.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

Santa Claus came to Annonay yezterday morning and I'm sure he must have departed with a lighter sack, since he left three immense packages at my door, one from 33 Glenelg, one from 7 Melbourne, and the third from Little Current. What a time we had undoing string and wrapping-paper, seals and ribbons; it was delightful from start to finish! Father Wally Platt came into my room to help and before very long we are almost lost in the midst of gifts of all kinds. I really don't know how to thank you for it all, and for all the kindness and generosity with which the things were selected, bought, wrapped up, packed and put on their long voyage. I should like to make mention of everything, but it would run into several pages I'm afraid. Let me say that every item is most welcome and will delight both the destinee and the confreres on many occasions in the near future.

Right on the spot Father Platt and I found a knife and cut two healthy pieces of your delicious cake, Mom, and I really mean "delicious". It is as fresh and moist as the day you wrapped it. This coming Sunday we shall all have a taste of it in the refectory, and since your reputation is already established from last year, you will not be surprised to learn that word got around the same day of its arrival - "la mère du Père Kirley lui a envoyé encore du gateau de Noël".

Thanks to Anne and George. Thanks also for a package of corn to make popcorn.



January 20, 1956

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Am mailing this from Lyon; came in yesterday to see our exchange agent, and to order our tickets for June at the American Express. Will be going back to Annonay this afternoon. Best to all and once again my profuse and sincere thanks for all your wonderful gifts.

* * *

January 20, 1956.

Dear Dad:

Sends birthday greetings to his father.
Acknowledges receipt of letter from his mother.

* * *

Maison St. Joseph, Annonay, Ardèche,
Friday, January 27, 1956.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

Apologizes for sending letter two or three days late. Acknowledges letter of January 13 with word of flu in Canada. Flu is prevalent in France also. New French government is controlled from the left. Concern about the fate of the Barangé Law which provides some government support for Catholic Schools. Loss of this grant would be felt at the Collège du Sacré-Coeur. Wintry weather did not last long. Still enjoying the contents of the Christmas boxes.

* * *

Annonay, France, February 1, 1956.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

Acknowledges letter giving news of the death of Monsignor J.V. McAuley.

The suddenness of Monsignor's death seemed to make the news of it all the more sudden. It came as a shock to me some four days after the actual occurrence, and I am sure was even more of a shock to you people, to the few faithful in particular who waited for him to come out of the sacristy to say his Mass as usual on the feast of St. Polycarp.

I'm sure a veil of sadness has fallen over the parish as well as over all the areas that came at one time or another under Monsignor's influence. It is sad to think that we have lost a man of great virtue. Monsignor was one of the relatively few who succeeded in discovering the secret of living the virtue of charity, the principles of which he taught to others as much by his own life as by his predication. I'm sure there is not one person who really knew him who would not point to him as a gigantic example of superantural magnanimity. It is sad also to think there was no one with him in his last hours. He who assisted so many souls across the threshold into eternity had to take the step himself alone, unfortified by the last sacraments. But they say a man dies as he lives so there is good reason to believe his great heart came to a stop in the midst of a prolonged act of love of God.

Monsignor's death - a multiple loss: to his family, to the parish, to the town of Lindsay, the diocese of Peterborough and to the Basilian Fathers.

* * *

February 4, 1956

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Maison St. Joseph, Annonay,
Saturday, February 4, 1956.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

Acknowledges letter of January 30th, with
Mass stipends.

It is really difficult to convince oneself that he is gone and probably the full realization of our loss will only be felt in time. Father McCorkell would be able to deliver a magnificent sermon, but I'm wondering how he kept from breaking down. He and Monsignor McAuley were very close friends. Wish I could have been there to hear it, but you will have to tell me of it this summer. His text was certainly a fitting one.

Father Eugene Malley's visit must have been a surprise for you. It was good of him to drop over, and I must send him a line one of these days acknowledging his kindness. We were great pals as cholerics, and later as seminarians, and even managed to get together over here. I'm sure he told you of our trip together through Spain and Portugal back in September of 1953. You may have other Basilian visitors over the weekends if the appointment of a new pastor is delayed. There will likely be someone coming down each week.

Closing remarks on wintry weather in the Ardèche.

* * *

February 11, 1956

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Maison St. Joseph, Annonay (Ardèche)
Saturday, February 11, 1956.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

First of all my greetings and best wishes to Mom on her birthday tomorrow. As usual my regards will arrive a few days late, but let me assure you Mom that they are nonetheless sincere. I shall be thinking of you when I offer Mass for you in the morning, for both you and Dad, in fact, according to the promise made not so long ago. May you have many more birthdays to come and each one better than the last.

Comments on the winter weather in France.

Today at dinner we ate what is considered a rare delicacy over here, roasted thrushes! They are a winter bird, considerably larger than what we know thrushes to be, though not quite the size of a pigeon. The scholastics shot them in the woods last week. They only got six, so we just had one apiece. Normally I think one man would be able to handle several as there isn't much on them. But what meat is there is very delicious. It has a wild taste all its own which not at all disagreeable particularly with a good red wine. Every day brings its own experiences.

* * *

Maison St. Joseph, Annonay,
Monday, February 20, 1956.

Dear Mom, Dad, and RM,

Acknowledges letter of February 9. Comments on severity of current winter in France.

We had a Jesuit Father with us today, a brother of one of our confreres in the Community. He

is studying Sociology at the University of Louvain but had to do some library work in different towns in Southern France, at the moment - Nice, Avignon, Arles, Nîmes, etc., so being in the neighborhood he stopped by to say hello. He (Cross?) will be going back to America next September to start teaching at the Jesuit University in Detroit. Since Lalouvesc is only a short distance from Annonay we took him over there this morning to visit the shrine of St. Francis Régis, a Jesuit missionary of the 17th century, whose relics are venerated in a basilica there.

Observations on the new French government.

With regard to the letter on Msgr. McAuley, I don't mind if you give it to the Post since it was meant for the Lindsay people. But I would just as soon you didn't put it in the Register though if you have already, don't feel badly about it. It's not that important. My main idea in writing it was to express my grief and sympathy to the parish.

* * *

Maison St. Joseph, Annonay,
Monday, February 27, 1956.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

Opening remarks comment on damage done to crops by the severe winter in France. Will sign and return Mass cards.

Speaking of sending things, I wonder if I could make a request, two in fact. Do you suppose you could find the account I wrote your of my travels in Spain and Portugal back in the Fall of 1953? If you have it handy I would appreciate looking over it again, es-

February 27, 1956

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pecially for the possible indication of places where we stayed the last time. It could come in handy when we go there after Easter. The second thing I take the liberty of asking of you is a bit unusual if not even a bit queer. Would it be possible to sned over a popcorn popper? We had a wonderfully successful demonstration one night not so long ago, but we had to pop the corn in a frying pan which is a bit heavy to shake during the required length of time. You could just send the popper part and snip off the handle to make the wrapping of it more reasonable. We can quickly adjust some sort of handle onto it overe here. Sorry to ask such a ridiculous thing of you, but the confreres were so thrilled seeing the grains of corn jump all over the place, and tasting it afterwards in melted butter that I think it might be worth the trouble to show them how it is really done. Poppers just don't seem to exist over here, mainly I suppose because the corn does not pop.

Comments on the new clergy at the parish in Lindsay. Closing remarks about St. Patrick's Day.

* * *

Maison St. Joseph, Annonay,
Tuesday, March 6, 1956.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

Observations on weather in Canada and report of damage down the street from the College when a pipe was split.

We are expecting the Procurator General from Toronto this Saturday, Father Terance McLaughlin. He comes over early in March each year and

stays in Rome until September regulating community affairs, making reports, etc. According to Canon Law he should really reside in Rome the whole year round, but being a key professor at the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies he spends two teaching terms per year in Toronto. He will come down to Annonay this Saturday and stay with us for the weekend before going on into Italy. This will be the third time I have welcomed him on his arrival in France; so it's getting to be sort of a regular thing!

Parents have met Bishop Marrocco the new Auxiliary Bishop of Toronto.

It won't be long now before we are thinking of packing our bags over here and coming to the New World for a visit. Our schedule so far, at least to the extent that we can foresee it, is as follows: We leave Cherbourg on June 21 and arrive in New York June 26. In case the seas has been bad (and "even if it hasn't") we plan to stay there until the night of June 27, when we will take a train through to Toronto, arriving sometime on the morning of June 28. Since I have a fair amount of reporting to do to the various Basilian authorities, Father George Flahiff for one and the Superior of St. Basil's Seminary for another, plus the Director of Graduate Studies, I shall have to take June 28 off entirely for that, spending it at the Seminary. But I hope to be free to meet you on June 29, even though officially my holidays don't begin until July 1. Would it be asking too much to invite you to Toronto on that day? I know the latter part of June is a busy time for all hands,

March 13, 1956

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with the result that i may be pretty hard for you to get away. If that is the case don't hesitate to tell me; I can easily climb aboard either the train or bus and be down in due time. I'll leave it up to you to decide, and to inform the band so they'll know where to come for the march past!

Closing remarks.

* * *

Maison St. Joseph, Annonay
Tuesday, March 13, 1956.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

Acknowledges letter and has signed and returned Mass cards. Observations on the weather. Has sent a box of chestnuts "glacés" to his parents.

Father Terence McLaughlin was with us for the weekend and spent most of his visit talking business with the Superior and counsellors. He should arrive in Rome tomorrow around now. Must get to work now. Happy St. Patrick's Day and my best wishes to Father Meagher.

* * *

Maison Saint-Joseph, Annonay,
Tuesday, March 20, 1956.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

Acknowledges Anne's letter with news of his mother's sickness. Account of the arrival of the chestnuts "glacés".

This Friday I shall be going out a parish about 50 miles south of here to help out with

things during Holy Week - Le Cheylard. It is a town of about 2000 I think and since most of the inhabitants wait until Holy Saturday to go to confession the poor curé is swamped. So to alleviate his burden somewhat and to give a hand with the different ceremonies from Palm Sunday until Easter Sunday I shall go down this weekend and stay at the rectory. Holy Week services have been altered considerably by the Sacred Congregation of Rites in Rome. Most of the functions during the Great Triduum take place at night now instead of the morning. It is more in keeping with the early traditions of the Church and with the actual historical facts. But at the same time it means some major modifications in the prayers and the order of things which may keep us guessing a bit for the first while.

Father Clarence Drouillard is coming down from Paris on Easter Monday and we hope to set out on our tour of Spain and Portugal Easter Tuesday. We have our visas in order and "pesetas" bought ahead of time: so Father Wally Platt and I are ready to set out at a moment's notice. It is a bit of a lucky break for me to get a chance to go to Spain at this particular time and to speak some Spanish since I have an oral exam in Spanish this June.

Closing remarks.

* * *

Rectory, Le Cheylard
Monday, March 26, 1956.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

Opening remarks. Glad to hear of improvement

March 26, 1956

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in his mother's health.

Le Cheylard is a little town of about 2,300 inhabitants south of Annonay, though still in the department of the Ardèche. The people seem to have kept the faith fairly well here. They turn out in great numbers to Sunday Mass and to the sacraments. There are, of course, a few who don't practice their religion, but compared to other parts of France the percentage is surprisingly small. At this time of year, Easter, the almost all get to confession and Communion which makes it a bit heavy for the clergy. Saturday, for example, we heard confessions for over eight hours, 9-12 noon and from 2 till after 7:00 p.m. This coming weekend will probably be the same, if not longer, for a large number seem to prefer Holy Saturday to go to confession. There are three of us to look after them all, so it is much better than if the pastor and curate were alone. But the sessions are rather long just the same. I look back with envy now at the two or three hours periods that seem to suffice in most parishes at home. One never knows when one is lucky.

Description of countryside. Town has ten small factories. Sends Easter greetings.

* * *

Hotel de Madrid, Madrid, España
April 6, 1956.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

Sends greetings from the capitol of Spain.
Acknowledges letters and gift parcel.



April 6, 1956

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Easter Sunday I spent partly at Le Cheylard where I said Mass at 11 a.m. and partly at Annonay after having taken the bus back. It was a quiet day and rather restful after the heavy sessions during Holy Week. The climax came with the confessions on Holy Saturday when we heard steadily, with the exception of a few minutes here and there from 7 am. to 12.15 noon and from 2 - 8.15 p.m. Even at that some 400 or more in the town did not make their Easter duty but I don't think they can say it was because the priests were not hearing.

Well, we left Tuesday morning, four of us: Fathers Wally Platt and Clarence Drouillard (Basilians) and Tom Donohar, an American lad from the U.S. Embassy in Paris. We went to Barcelona first, then to Montserrat, Manresa, Zaragoza, and today to Madrid. We're having lovely weather and enjoying everything.

Closing remarks.

* * *

Hotel Victoria, Gibraltar
Thursday, April 12, 1956.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

Glad to hear English spoken again.

We left our U.S. Embassy friend, Tom Donohar, at the airport at Malaga, a resort city along the south coast of Spain. He flew back to Madrid and was to go on back to Paris. So there are just the three of us now, Fathers Clarence Drouillard, Wally Platt and myself. And at the moment I am along on the colony of Gibraltar, the toher two having taken a boat over to Tangiers.



April 24, 1956

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Description of Gibraltar. Outline of the rest of the trip. Closing remarks.

* * *

Maison Saint Joseph, Annonay
Tuesday, April 24, 1956.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

Back again, safe and sound, after some 3750 miles during the past three weeks. We arrived at Annonay yesterday evening very happy to settle down for awhile and rest up a bit. Travelling is very nice, but after a certain length of time one looks forward to the regular schedule of the school year.

Acknowledges letters and the popper for making pop corn.

To come back for a moment to our trip we saw a multitude of interesting and educational things as you may imagine, and prayed at some of the great wold shrines: Fatima, Loyola, Segovia (St. John of the Cross), Avila, and so on. We unfortunately didn't make Santiago, the ancient shrine in Spain to St. James the Greater. It is so out of the way in north-west Galicia that we had hardly money or energy or time to go so far. But we saw many wonderful places, nonetheless, and I must confess the same places that I had seen three years ago meant much more to me this time. Time doesn't permit me to write you an account of the entire circuit, but with the aid of my diary notes I should be able to relate the highlights of it to you this summer. We had some exciting moments such as being refused entry into Portugal by the police and getting

May 2, 1956

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in just the same. Two of us, Father Wally Platt and myself, had no visa for Portugal, an itme that is strictly required by the Portuguese police; but after a three hour arguement in a minxture of English, French and Spanish, plus three telephone calls to Lisbon from the frontier we managed to get our passports stamped and gain entry. The story is a rather long one so we shall go over it together in detail during the holid-ays.

Closing remarks touch on approach of exams.

* * *

Annonay, May 2, 1956.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

Acknowledges letter. Discusses weather and crops in Canada and France. Possibility of Father Kay being named pastor of Lindsay is a pleasing one.

Father Terence McLaughlin is with us again for a few days. He came up from Rome last Friday night and will probably be going back this coming Friday. His visit this time (as usual) is strictly a business one. He is holding meetings with the Superior and the ouncil here as well as with the Bishop of the diocese. None of his manoeuvres are publicly discussed yet, but it seems that negotiations are going on for the retaking of the College here. As I may have mentioned to you previously, the Collège Sacré-Coeur at Annonay has been in the hands of the diocese for exactly 50 years, though before that time

May 9, 1956

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it belonged to the Basilian Fathers. And it is only now that we have been in a position to get it back. I don't know any details as yet of the transaction, or even if agreements have been made, but by the time of the next letter things should be a bit clarified.

Closing remarks.

* * *

Maison Saint-Joseph, Annonay,
Wednesday, May 9, 1956.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

Sends Mother's Day greetings to his mother. Acknowledges letter. Observations on weather in Canada and France.

Our Procurator General, Father Terence McLaughlin, has come and gone, having regulated not a few affairs touching on the College here in the interim. Though the official papers have not yet arrived signed by the Bishop and his council, we expect them any day, and can now say the school is ours once again. It was in 1903 that the state took it away from the Basilians and from 1905 to this year it has been in the hands of the diocese. So you can imagine how happy we are to receive it back, even if there is a considerable debt to be paid off. We shall begin the direction of it next September; since there remains only a short time before the end of the school year it would hardly be worthwhile much less practical or politic to take over at once. But we shall have occasion to talk of that at greater length before long.

Closing remarks discuss plans for return to Canada on holidays in the summer months.

* * *



May 15, 1956

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Annonay, May 15, 1956.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

Opening remarks touch on the fine weather in France, acknowledges two letters.

Your new appointment in connection with the Catholic Women's League sounds like a great work of mercy. I'm sure you must find it very consoling to bring a bit of joy to those folks who are confined to indoors, even though it is not always easy. I shall be glad to accompany you on your rounds this summer and to make their acquaintances. We used to do a bit of that work when we were scholastics in the Seminary; we used to go out to Our Lady of Mercy Hospital in Sunnyside which is for incurables, as you probably know. But I'm sure we didn't go often enough.

The negotiations for our passage this June is gradually being effected. We have to go into Lyons this Thursday for inoculations against small-ox, and to pick up the transit visas for the two boys and that should about finish the red tape. By the way, don't worry about the financing of the trip. The Community is taking care of that, in fact already has. Father Louis Bondy sent me a cheque some time ago for the tickets, which I turned into francs at once, and which I still have here while awaiting for the agent at the American Express to finish the booking for both boat and trains. We won't be travelling in luxury at all, but I think we should be able to make out a very pleasant voyage. One of the first things I intend to purchase after paying for the tickets is a bottle of infallible sea-sick pills, if such exist.

Description of a bull fight in Annonay.

* * *

Dear Greg, Nor, and wee ones.

Acknowledges letter received. Observations on the weather.

Today Father Wally Platt and I are slowly coming to after a stunning exam yesterday morning (8 a.m. - noon) that left us staggering. We were sort of expecting the worst, and got it, despite our best hopes for something a bit better. The results of it will come out June 13, and, of course, we haven't despaired of appearing among the list of successful candidates; but today at least, we are too groggy to start preparing for the orals, which will take place June 15th and 16th. We are setting it aside as a day of recovery, more or less. So don't be too surprised if some of these sentences are queer and incoherent.

Our two novices, Jacques Deglesne and Michel Deglène, are growing more and more excited as the day of departure draws near. They are finishing up their philosophy courses now before going to their respective homes to spend the last few days with their parents. Both of them are from Annonay, and have scarcely travelled beyond the boundaries of Ardèche, so you can imagine what a trip like this represents to them. I don't think really they have any idea of the distance, just how immense the ocean is, now how expansive the North American continent. The whole of France could be set inside the limits of Canada between 19 and 20 times, a fact that simply surpasses their imagination. They will find it rather difficult for the first while, being so far from home and not understanding

or speaking much English. But they will make out; other lads of 19 and 20 years have weathered worse than that.

Looks forward to meeting him on June 29th.
Closing remarks

* * *

Maison Saint-Joseph, Annonay
Friday, Feast of the Sacred Heart, 1956.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

Acknowledges receipt of two letters. Comments on local news.

Today is a major feast here, since the school is under the patronage of the Sacred Heart, "Collège du Sacré-Coeur". Classes and study periods have been suspended and a whole holiday declared which pleases the pupils as you can imagine. We had a Solemn High Mass this morning at 9:30 a.m.; and this afternoon the kids are to attend a bicycle race, after which they will be on a hike until supper time. The race is a preliminary one to the big national race in July about which you may have heard, "Le Tour de France" and in which several different countries participate. This one today is less grandiose, but will require an effort on the part of the cyclists. They are to bike about 150 miles on pretty rough country and through occasional showers (we have had two already since this morning) little drenchers, one might call them, which together with a blustering sort of a wind add to the difficulty of the endeavour. They are to pass by Annonay around 1:00 p.m.

Good crop of cherries but no straberries at the College.

June 21, 1956

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Father Wally Platt and I are still plugging away in preparation for the oral exams which are to take place June 15 and 16. At least we hope they will take place. It depends on whether or not we were successful on the written exams of May 25 and 31. We shall find out the results next week, the feast of St. Basil to be exact. We are both growing a bit weary from cramming and I for one shall be most happy to take off on a long homeward-bound journey.

The two scholastics, Jacques Deglesne and Michel Deglène, are home with their parents just now, on furlough as it were, before leaving on June 17th for Paris and thence seawards. I think Father Charles Roume is going to drive us to Paris in the community car as he has some buying to do there and plans on taking advantage of the occasion. It will save us paying some \$25 in train fare and will certainly be more pleasant.

Will get another letter off to you before leaving. Should you wish to send any word to Paris while we are there (June 17-21) the address will be: 1 rue Jean Dolent, Paris XIV^e, France.

* * *

Paris, June 21, 1956.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

This will just be a note in something of a hurry since we are taking the train in a few minutes to Cherbourg where we are to embark this evening.

Everything is going well. We have spent three wonderful days sight-seeing in Paris.

June 21, 1956

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The three of us (Jacques Deglesne, Michel Deglène and myself) are worn out now, so five days of restful voyage will come in handy.

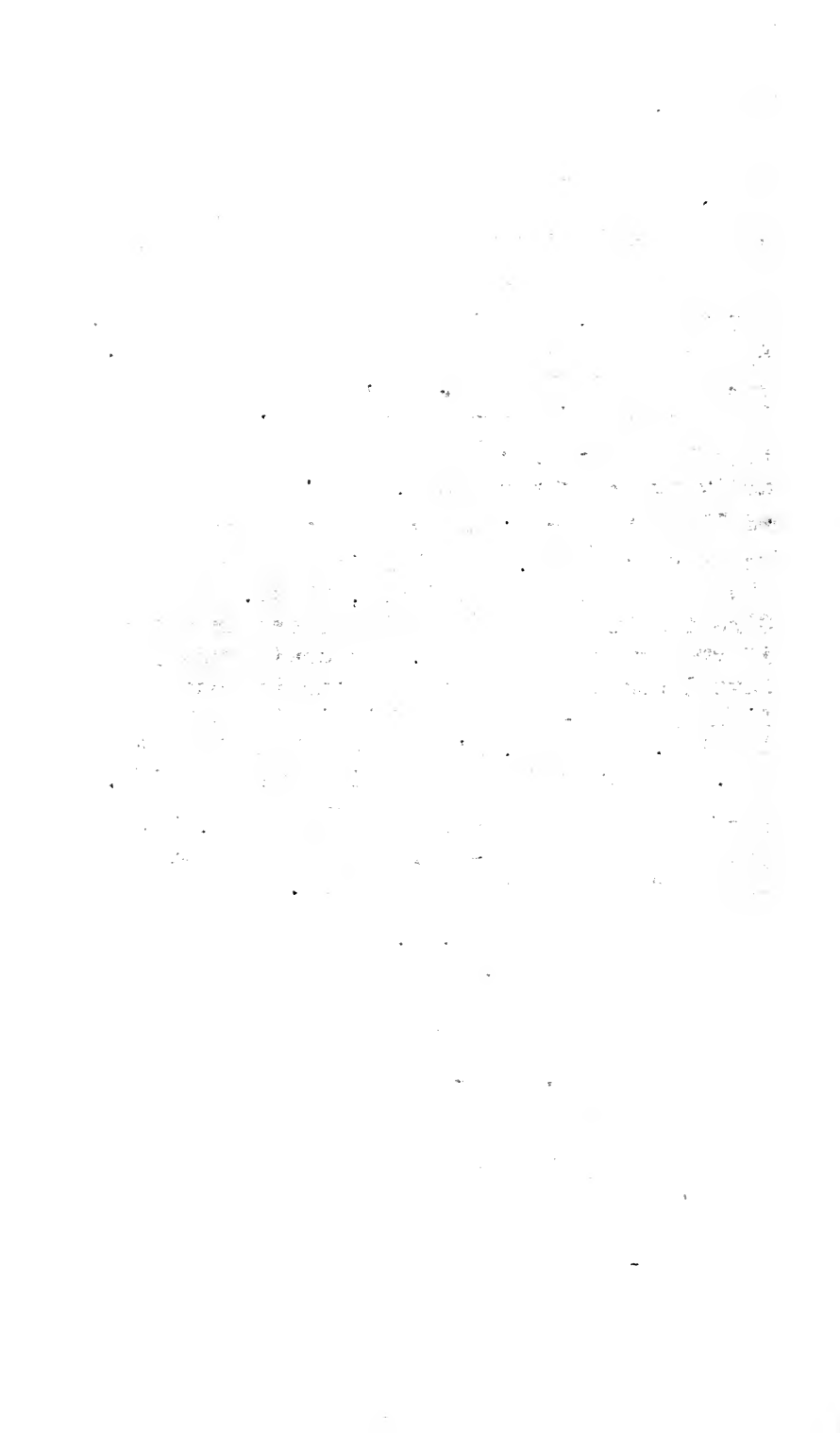
You will be glad to hear the exams went off successfully, both the written and the orals. A thousand thanks for all your good prayers. The degree is finished now, so I can begin teaching in France next September.

News has come to us from a recent passenger arriving of a stormy sea, so I've doubled my stock of pills. They better work!

See you all soon. The handiest would be for you to come to the Seminary, 95 St. Joseph Street around noon (shortly before or after if you wish) on June 29. We could perhaps have lunch together before starting out Lindsaywards - even a picnic if the weather is fine. However, I'll leave those plans to you. Whatever you decide will suit me fine.

Sorry to make this such a rushed note, but you know how it is - tains and boats have a habit of not waiting for people.

* * *



August 5, 1956

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St. Basil's Seminary
95 St. Joseph Street
Toronto, Canada
Sunday, August 5, 1956.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

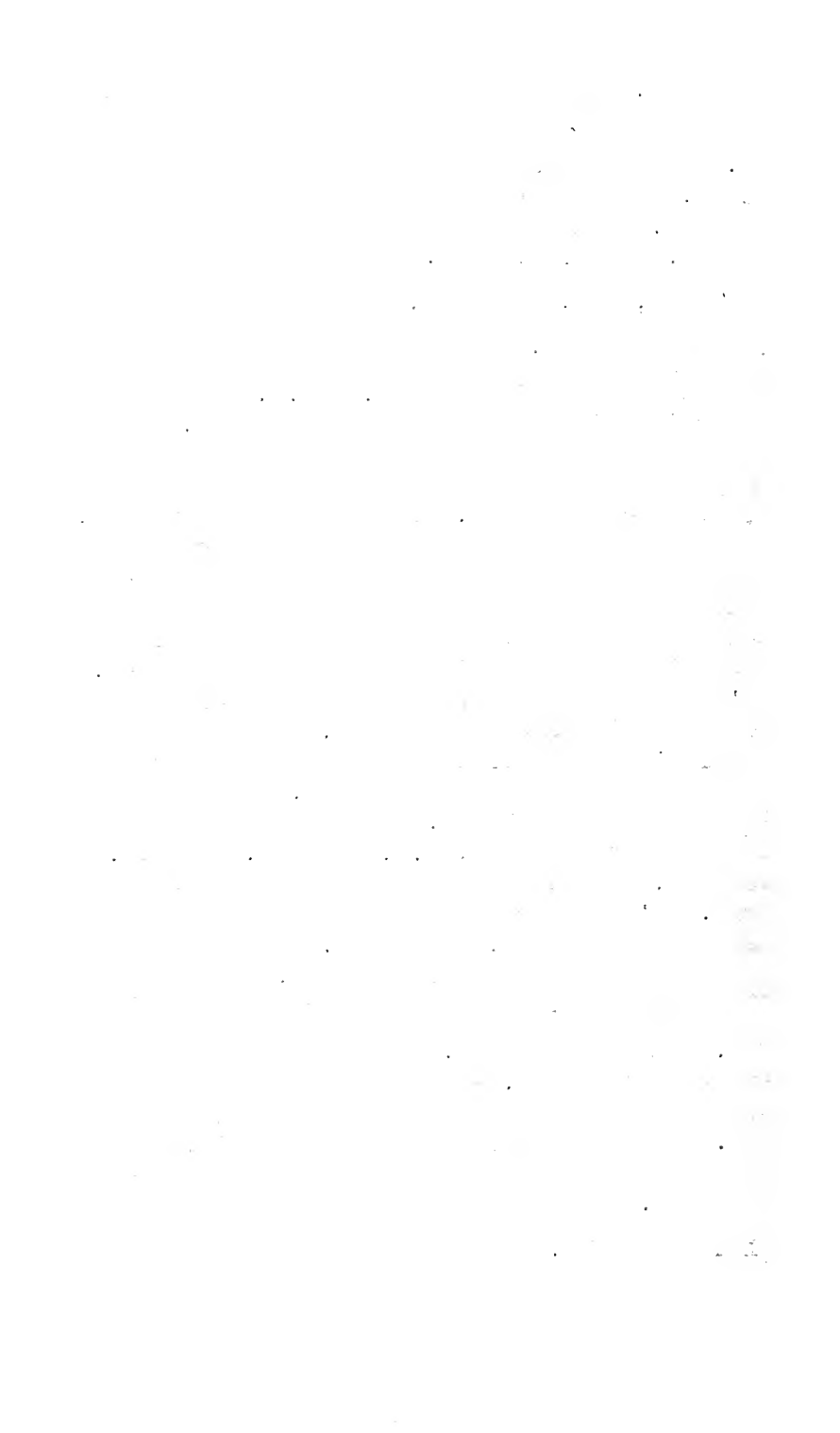
Opening remarks.

In about an hour's time (2:30 p.m.) a carload of us is going up to Strawberry Island, one of the crew being Father Blake Coll from Calgary who is to preach the Retreat to the scholastics up there. It begins this evening. The rest of the carload will just be other priests like myself who want a week of relative tranquility in which to get some work done for the opening of classes this September while everyone else will be busy praying. We'll be free to concentrate on the work to be taught in school next year, though I shouldn't be surprised if we knock off every so often for a swim in the lake, or an outing in one of the rowboats. The address up there is Strawberry Island, P.O. Box 111, Orillia, Ontario, just in case you may wish to send a word. I'll be coming back to the Seminary here next Saturday, August 11.

Jacques Deglesne and Michel Deglène are fine and still talking about their visit to Lindsay, and to the farms. They really found everyone charming, and consider those two days the best they have spent in Canada so far. This afternoon they are going into the Novitiate and go on retreat this evening for ten days.

Clsing remarks.

* * *



August 9, 1956

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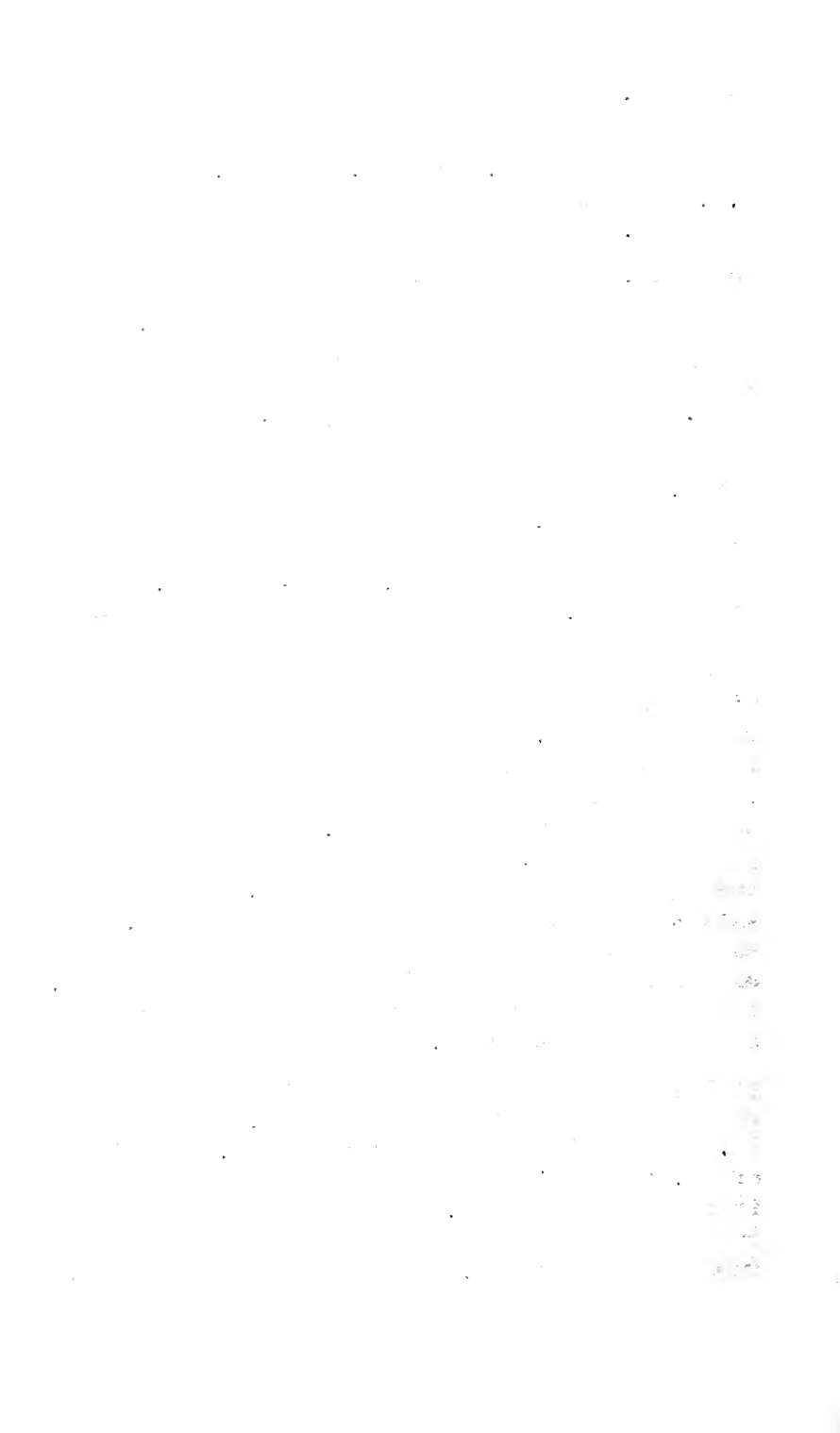
Strawberry Island, Orillia, Ontario,
P.O. Box 111
August 9, 1956.

Dear Mom, Dad and Kink,

Weather is pleasant at Strawberry Island. Scholastics are filling in a swamp section that has been a breeding ground for mosquitoes. It is a long term project.

Tomorrow I shall be going down to Toronto again. It would have been possible to stay until Saturday, but I may have to pay a visit to the French Steamship Lines Office before Sunday to arrange, or re-arrange, my passage over. Rumour has it from very authentic sources (none other than Father George Flahiff himself) that Father George Beaune will have to leave for France sooner than we had planned. Apparently there are several items in connection with his work at Annonay that will have to be lined up some two weeks before the opening of school, and were he to go over with me, he would only arrive there one day before the kids come back. So our tickets will have to be shuffled somewhat, and I should like to see about the possibility of securing a single cabin as soon as possible. The longer one puts it off the less chance one has of getting it.

It looks as though I shall be able to do weekend work at Lindsay on Sunday, August 19. At least Father Laurence Shook, superior of St. Michael's College gave me to believe it could be arranged. Someone from the Basilians has to go down to replace Father Dubberry that Sunday, and it may as well be me.



August 13, 1956

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I would have to be there Saturday for Confessions, Saturday evening probably, unless Father Carroll prefers it earlier. But I'll give you more definite word on that later. Should you be sending a note to Sister you might mention the fact so that she can plan on staying in Lindsay until I can get a chance to see her.

Closing remarks.

* * *

95 St. Joseph Street, Toronto 5, Ontario
Monday, August 13, 1956.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

Acknowledges letter with Mass stipends.
Father is in bed with a sore leg.

Speaking of sailing I have decided to go with Father George Beaune if he is not leaving too early, so that my date of departure will be moved up somewhat. We were going to leave on the "Ile de France", September 19, but we find there is another ship, the Flandre, sailing on September 13, and we will try to secure passage on it if possible. We were down to the French Lines office today and the agent was pretty sure we would be able to make the change. They are to let us know in a few days. In that case I shall be coming down sooner than September 1 in order to have two weeks at home before leaving. I'm not sure just what date it will be, but probably around August 25. In that way I would be going back to Toronto September 9th and leaving for New York the following day, September 10th. It seems there is a visit to

August 13, 1956

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be made to our school and college in Rochester on the way down to New York, so I shall be spending a day there before going on to the port of departure. I hope that the new schedule will not throw a wrench in your plans for a family re-union, Mom. We could still have it September 9, and I could leave in the evening to go back to Toronto. It is too bad in a way that these changes have to be made. But Father Beaune counted so much on making the trip together, as I did myself, that we figure a sailing six days earlier will be a better solution than each going over individually. And, as a matter of fact, the extra time over at Annonay before classes start will prove very useful for both of us. It will take some time to get things sort of lined up before the kids come back.

Spent five hours getting documents, etc. for trip to France. Retreat begins this evening. Remarks on weather. Arrangements for coming to Lindsay.

* * *

Paris, Thursday, September 20, 1956.

Dear Mom, Dad, Kink, and all,

Opening remarks.

After leaving George and Anne and Kink and Joe at the S_eminary Sunday night, I attended a send-off party at the Institute of Mediaeval Studies and then off to Rochester the next morning around 9:00 a.m. I had a grand visit with all the confreres there, both at the high school, Aquinas Institute, and the College, St. John Fisher. After spending the

September 20, 1956

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night there I caught a fast train to New York around 11:00 a.m., getting into the big city about 6:00 p.m. There Father George Beaune and I raced around seeing what we could see in two days. We were joined on the second day by Father Donal O'Gorman, a Basilian who will be studying at Columbia University this year. Among other things we took a lovely launch tour around Manhattan Island, a three hour ride which I would strongly recommend to anyone of you who might be there sometime. It is worth the time and money.

Sailed on Thursday, September 13th, on the Flandre and was sea sick most of the time. Is spending two days in Paris and going on to Annonay, September 23rd. Closing remarks.

* * *

Collège du Sacré-Coeur, Annonay
Saturday, October 27, 1956.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

Acknowledges letters and Mass stipends. Glad to hear of improvement in his father's sore leg. Cool at Annonay and the furnace has been lighted. Visit from a graduate of the College who was a missionary priest in China and had been expelled by the Communists. Closing remarks.

* * *

Annonay, November 4, 1956.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

Apologizes for not having written sooner. School on holidays from noon of Halloween for All Saints and All Souls days.



There is always a lot of parish work before the feast of All Saints; the people go to confession in great numbers on the eve, and assist at the Masses and services for the dead on November 1st and 2nd. Nearly all the confreres were out helping in the parishes somewhere. For some reason I wasn't called on. Father George Beaune went out to a small country church not far from Annonay and stayed over night in a typical French rural rectory. It wasn't exactly what he has been used to in Canada; but he was glad of the experience and told us many an amusing story when he came back.

Observations on world events, particularly in Hungary.

* * *

Collège du Sacré-Coeur, Annonay, Ardèche,
Monday, November 12, 1956.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

Once again sorry for delay in sending letter. Acknowledges letter with Mass stipends. Glad to hear of good weather in Canada.

This coming Sunday I have to give a sermon at the parish church here on a subject I don't know a great deal about, the Red Cross. It seems the Annonay branch is having a special Mass and of course must have a sermon; so the sad lot has fallen on me. That is why I have been a bit slow about answering, and why this letter is really only a note. Next time, "espérons" it will be a bit more substantial.

* * *



November 20, 1956

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Collège du Sacré-Coeur, Annonay
November 20, 1956.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

Apologizes for another tardy letter.

Well the sermon has come and gone. I gave it for better or worse and to a very packed church on the occasion of the Red Cross' annual appeal for funds. It is a relief to have it over as a lot of time was required in its preparation. Knowing as little about the organization in general, let alone in France, I had to readhup a certain amount of facts, all of which were very interesting but time-absorbing as well, along with one's regular teaching schedule.

Students are writing exams this week.

The kids are gradually learning a bit of English. Today I brought an alarm clock into class and we worked at how to tell the time in English. They couldn't understand why we should say for 4:15, "it is a quarter past four", whereas at 4:30 we drop the "a" and say, "it is half past four". Little curiosities like that are not easy to explain; nor is it always possible, or even necessary. I sometimes have to tell them as a last resort, "I don't know why; but that's the way we say it, and that's that." French has plenty of such difficulties, some of which I enjoy pulling out of the bag when they think English is impossible.

Closing remarks touch on lovely weather in France and express hope that Indian Summer is still at Lindsay.

* * *



December 11, 1956

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Collège du Sacré-Coeur, Annonay, Ardèche,
Tuesday, December 11, 1956.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

Acknowledges two letters and Christmas gift from Aunt Mary. French postoffice employees take their time delivery Christmas parcels, any time up to the middle of February. Glad to hear that the Catholic Women's League Tea was a success.

Christmas isn't far off now. Our boys are writing their term exams these days, which marks will go on the Christmas reports. Classes continue as usual, so the semester comes to an end in the midst of both class preparation and correcting of papers. Everything has to be cleared up by Saturday noon, December 22 which means we shall be free of scholastic duties as soon as the kids get out. We are almost all going to different parishes here and there to help the curés out. I shall be at Lamastre for midnight Mass, hearing confessions the eve, preaching and probably saying one or two of the parish Masses on Christmas day.

Asks if Kink is going on the southern trip she was planning some time ago.

Had a letter this week from one of the French novices, Michel Deglène. Both he and Jacques Deglesne are very happy, have even put on weight. They would love to receive a card from you at Christmas, if you think of it. The address would be Messrs. Jacques Deglesne and Michel Deglène, St. Basil's Novitiate, Richmond Hill, Ontario, R.R. # 1. He inquired after you all.

* * *



Collège du Sacré-Coeur, Annonay
Tuesday, December 18, 1956.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink, and all.

Sends Christmas greetings to all. The practice of sending cards in France is not widespread and it is hard to find cards. Acknowledges card and gift from Lou and Jean.

Students are impatient for the close of school at noon on Saturday coming.

Next Sunday I shall take the bus for Lamastre, a city south and west of Annonay, about fifty miles, where I shall help out with the Confessions, etc. Monday and Tuesday. So if the next letter is a bit slow in coming you'll understand. I should be back in Annonay sometime Wednesday, and shall be here for the rest of the holidays.

Did you hear of the death of Father Joseph Timmons of St. Michael's College School? He was only 44. A blood clot in the lung struck him down some weeks ago and although very weakened, everyone thought he would recover. But it developed into coronary thrombosis and took him away in a matter of minutes. He is a big loss to the High School as he would certainly have succeeded Father Basil Regan shortly as Principal.

Closing remarks.

* * *

December 26, 1956

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Collège du Sacré-Coeur, Annonay,
December 26, 1956.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Kink,

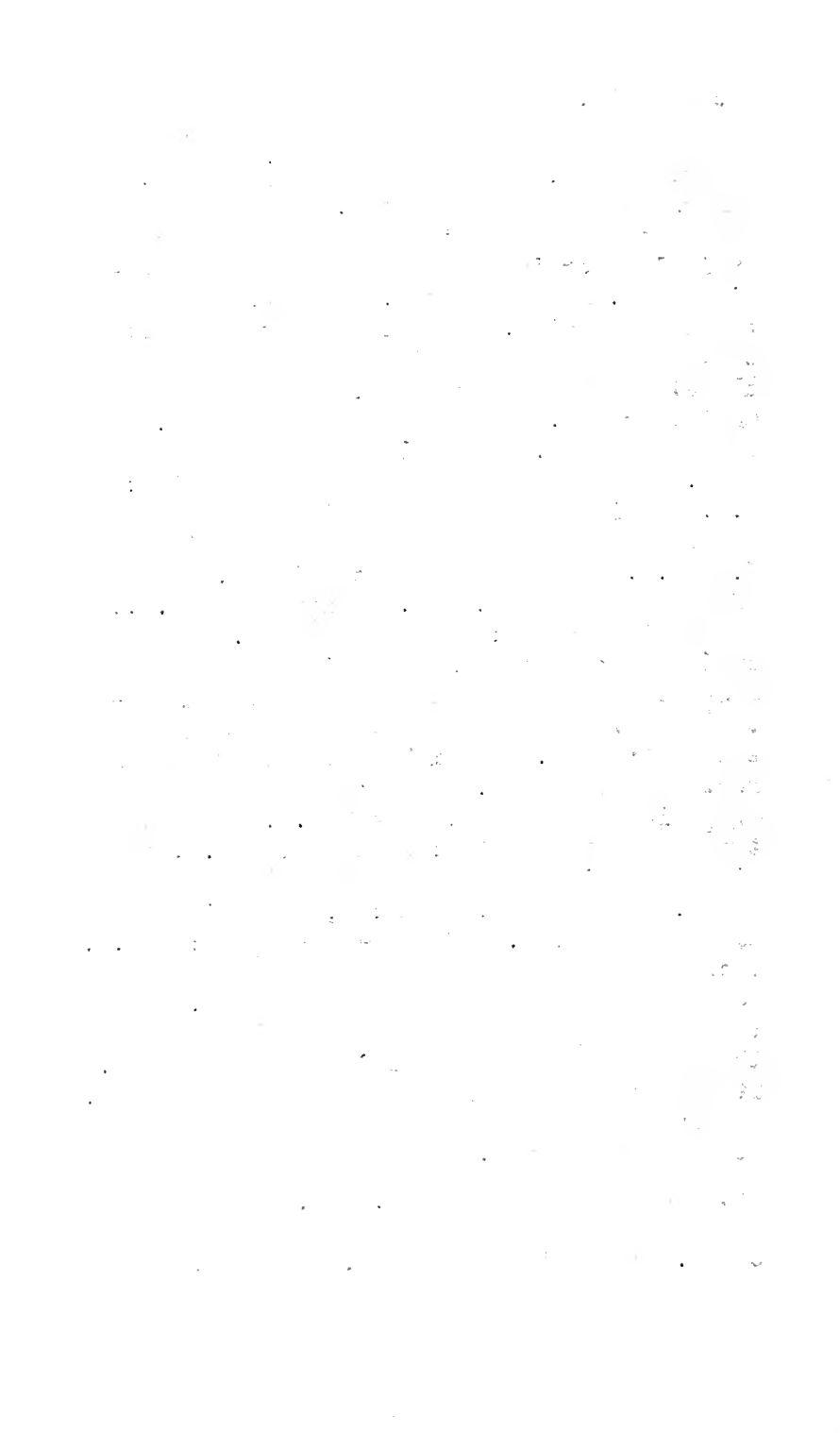
Opening remarks.

Saturday last was an exciting morning for the students. Thank Heavens I didn't have any class in the forenoon: the other teachers tell me the lads were very restless. At 11 o'clock they were all grouped in the large study hall where the Director of Studies read out the results of their examinations. That, of course, was pleasant for some, and less so for others who didn't quite make the grade in certain subjects, and most uncomfortable for a few poor unfortunates who didn't come close to making the grade in anything. There are always a few in that category. You might be interested in the English results: in my class of beginners 15 out of 25 were successful; among the second year kids in one class 10 out of 24 got through, and in the other class 10 out of 16 passed. Since I both set the exams and corrected the papers you'll think either I am very severe or the boys are not too strong in English. Probably both of these factors enter into the picture. In any case, the marks are always rather low at Christmas and I do believe in keeping a high standard rather than a mediocre or ridiculously low one. A certain number of those who failed were close to the line and should pull themselves into position before the finals in June.

Sortly after the departure of the kids we went to work in earnest on the crib or cribs, for

we put up two, one in the College Chapel, and one in the main parlour. Some of the boys who were not able to take a bus home until late or in the evening helped us considerably, and of course, were only too glad to be of service. Despite our best efforts we were only able to finish the one in the chapel before going to parish work early Christmas eve. I went down to Lamastre, a town of some 3,500 people 40 miles south of here. Immediately on arriving there at 9:30 a.m. I joined the curé and his assistant in the confessional (they had begun hearing at 7:00 a.m.) and we heard until 12:15, and after lunch from 2:00 p.m. until 7:30 p.m., and again from 11:00 till midnight. The curé sang the High Mass at midnight before a church packed to the doors and the assistant and I gave Holy Communion for a good twenty minutes. I think at least 800 people must have received. We heard confessions again in the morning, 8 to 9 a.m. I said two of my Masses at 9:30 and 10:00 a.m. (the first of which I offered for you) and the third, a High Mass, at 10:30, preaching and also at the 9:00. After Vespers at 3:00 p.m. I caught a bus back to Annonay and shall be here now for the rest of the holidays. So there is about the regular schedule of all the professors of the Collège for Christmas. It was very enjoyable though a bit fatiguing. We have a chance now to rest up a bit before school opens again.

Received your good letter, Mom, written a week or so before Christmas and containing a gift of \$5.00; my sincere thanks, but permit me to



say you should not have sent it, for your needs certainly exceed mine. I also received your more recent letter containing the two Mass stipends. Thanks also for that one, and rest assured that such a request is no inconvenience whatever, it is on the contrary a pleasure. Tell Mary when you see her that I shall say the Mass this week sometime.

The mailman has been most generous these days bringing me a number of letters which now form a considerable stack on my desk, and which I hope to answer this very week.

Our weather is almost ideal, just chilly enough to keep a light covering of snow from disappearing. This morning, however, a sleet storm sort of wrecked things, and left the streets and roads very dangerous.

Hope you are all well, and that everyone enjoyed the great feast. When you have time I know you will write and tell me all about it. In the meantime, best to all hands and in particular a very Happy and Holy New Year.

Sincerely in Our Lord,

Fr. Kevin

* * *

(Transcribed from the originals kept by Mrs. Kirley)



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